



PHD

How I have arrived at a notion of knowledge transformation, through understanding the story of myself as creative writer, creative educator, creative manager, and educational researcher

Spiro, Jane

Award date:
2008

Awarding institution:
University of Bath

[Link to publication](#)

Alternative formats

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact:
openaccess@bath.ac.uk

Copyright of this thesis rests with the author. Access is subject to the above licence, if given. If no licence is specified above, original content in this thesis is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) Licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>). Any third-party copyright material present remains the property of its respective owner(s) and is licensed under its existing terms.

Take down policy

If you consider content within Bath's Research Portal to be in breach of UK law, please contact: openaccess@bath.ac.uk with the details. Your claim will be investigated and, where appropriate, the item will be removed from public view as soon as possible.

How I have arrived at a notion of *knowledge transformation*, through understanding the story of myself as creative writer, creative educator, creative manager, and educational researcher.

**Volume 1 of 2
Jane Roberta Spiro
A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
University of Bath
Department of Education
January 2008**

COPYRIGHT

Attention is drawn to the fact that copyright of this thesis rests with its author. This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognize that its copyright rests with its author and that no quotation from the thesis and no information derived from it may be published without the prior consent of the author.

This thesis may be made available for consultation within the University Library and may be photocopied or lent to other libraries for the purposes of consultation.

Signed _____
Jane Spiro

CONTENTS

How I have arrived at a notion of *knowledge transformation*, through understanding the story of myself as creative writer, creative educator, creative manager, and educational researcher.

Table of contents: Audio-visual files

Connecting stories	2
Acknowledgements	6
and a note on inclusion of participants	
Abstract	7

Section A The sources of belief

What are the sources of belief that shape my practice as an educator? How do these form the foundation for my concept of knowledge transformation?

1 Introduction: story sources and starting points	8
1.1 What are my concerns in this thesis?	8
1.2 Why am I concerned?	10
1.3 What is my methodology and why have I chosen it?	12
1.4 What are the core values which inform my practice?	19
1.5 The four personae: inner and outer paradoxes	21
1.6 The journey towards knowledge transformation	24
1.7 By what criteria do I wish to be judged?	27
1.8 Towards a notion of knowledge transformation	29
2 Connecting stories: from reading to beliefs	30
2.1 Story as methodology, story as resource	31
2.2 Story and researching the self	32
2.3 The story and authorial voice	35
2.4 Reading as a writer: the universal story	40
2.5 Your story is mine: the yellowbrick road	42
3. Weaving stories: from lived to created story	47
3.1 Creative landscapes	47
3.2 Interweaving the remembered, the lived and the created: the methodology of memory	50
3.3 Where we have reached, where we are going	79

Section B I as creative writer

How does knowledge transformation manifest itself in my practice as a creative writer?

4. Writing as finding a voice: from Finchley to Lithuania	82
4.1 Starting places	82
4.2 Writing as journey	85
4.3 Writing as finding a voice	88
4.4 Writing as communication	93
4.5 Writing as a reader	94
5. Writing for audience: from myth to word count	96
5.1 Writing and the notion of authenticity	96
5.2 Language as rune: <i>The Place of the Lotus</i> and <i>The Twin Chariot</i>	98
5.3 Finding the heart in themes: <i>Travelling Light</i> and <i>The Man Upstairs</i>	105
5.4 Authenticity, transformation, and finding a voice	118
6. Writing for performance: speaking out	119
6.1 From research to quintessential moments: two minutes as essence	120
6.2 Television presenting as knowledge transformation	128
6.3 Living research: making stories walk and talk	129
6.4 Performance as transformation	136

Section C I as creative educator

How does knowledge transformation manifest itself in my practice as a creative educator? How have I found connections between creative writer: creative educator roles?

7. Knowledge transformation as educational process: learning to change	138
7.1 Transforming knowledge as an educator: steps on the journey	138
7.2 Finding a voice: developing creativity through criticality	148
7.3 Becoming visible: from privacy to publication	167
7.4 The neverending story: building <i>Storybuilding</i>	185
8. Making our stories accountable in the academy: judgement and evaluation	196
8.1 Creativity and language learning	196
8.2 Creativity and the scaffolding of learning	199
8.3 Assessment as a scaffold for creativity	205
8.4 Students crossing the bridge: appreciative reader to reflective writer	211
8.5 Marking the journey: tutor feedback	214
8.6 Analysing the results	216
8.7 Intertwining teaching and assessment: scaffolding creativity	218
9. Teacher stories: teaching to change	222
9.1 Teaching as learning: action research as a change agent	222
9.2 Sharing teacher stories	236
9.3 Teacher stories as knowledge transformation	241

Section D I as creative manager

How does knowledge transformation manifest itself in my practice as a creative manager? How have I found connections between creative writer: creative educator: creative manager roles?

10. Story as crisis: critical incidents in higher education	242
10.1 Redundancy as paradox	244
10.2 Falling down the pothole: telling the story as it unfolds	245
10.3 On not living happily ever after	257
10.4 Work and the law	258
10.5 Redundancy and the alchemy of creation	259
10.6 Critical incident as transformation	262
11. Management as transformation: leadership in the academy	264
11.1 Connecting leadership and management	265
11.2 Joining up individual and team learning: managing transformation	268
11.3 Has transformation really happened?	272
11.4 From pothole to glass ceiling: learning from crisis	279
11.5 Joining up stories: music as metaphor	284

Section E Knowledge transformation and the academy

What insights does this analysis offer for the academy as whole?

12. Threading stories together: knowledge transformation as living theory	
12.1 Learning from reflective practice	290
12.2 Learning about learning: knowledge transformation as deep learning	294
12.3 Learning from multiple roles	299
12.4 Clarifying values and resolving paradox	300
12.5 Have I fulfilled my own criteria for success? If so, why is this significant?	302

Bibliography	304
---------------------	-----

Learner and teacher as fellow travellers	325
A story tribute to Jack Whitehead	

Volume 2: Connecting stories	
Appendix Readings 1 - 26	

Audio-visual files: Connecting Stories

Connections

1. **Story workshop**
October 22nd 2005
• Clips 1 - 11
Chapter 7
2. **Poems and Stories**
• Choirs of Angels
• Hungarian poem
• Polish poem
Chapter 4
3. **TV programmes**
Jewish life cycle
Clip 1: Kaddish
Ritual dishes
Clip 2: Chicken soup
Clip 3: Chula
Days of rest
Clip 4: Buddhist Sabbath
Clip 5: Moslem Sabbath
Conversions
Clip 6: Buddhism into music
Clip 7: Taoism into Tai Chi
The Jews of Devon and Cornwall
Clip 8: Work in the East End
Clip 9: East End synagogues
Purim puppets
Clip 10: Purim story
Clip 11: Esther and Vashti
Clip 12: Mordecai and Haman
Clip 13: Puppet performance
Chapter 6
4. **Interviews with colleagues**
July 2005
• Martin Clips 1 – 7
• Richard Clips 8 – 10
• Teresa Clips 11- 12
• Fred and Juliet Clips 13 – 22
Chapter 11
5. **Music**
• In C: Two Timing project: June 22nd 2006
• Massenet: Masterclass at Dartington International Music School,
August 2006
Chapter 11
Chapter 12

Acknowledgements and note on inclusion of participants

This dissertation was made possible through engagement with a wide community of students, teachers, colleagues, friends and family. Their testimonies and voices are included here, with gratitude and humility.

Students who have been part of the activities and evolution of ideas in this dissertation are: College of St. Mark and St. John creative writing class 1998 - 2000, MA Language and Culture class at Oxford Brookes University 2001 - 2003, MA ELT and TESOL students 2001 - 2006, BA Language through Literature students 2004 - 2006, Oxford International Summer School teachers 2006 - 2007. Their words and names appear with their permission where it has been possible to trace them; otherwise pseudonyms have been used.

Those who are part of the collective messages of this dissertation and for whom warm thanks are due: colleagues in the Cultural Criminals music project described in Chapter 1, masterminded by Roger Perkins; family members whose story forms part of the account in Chapter 4, and in particular the memory of Julek Tigner whose living testimony was lost during the course of this dissertation; friends in the Totnes community who agreed to be part of the television programmes in Chapter 6: Alan Gorman, Toby Fairlove, Sam Richards, Glen Park, Moh Moh, Tony Gee, Elaine Moss; Rob Pope, who shared with me the experiences described in Chapter 8; colleagues who agreed to be part of the interviews in Chapter 11, and for their names to be included: Fred Tarttelin, Juliet Henderson, Martin Millar, Teresa Woodbridge and Richard Haill; friends who were part of the music masterclass described in Chapter 12: Helen Yorke, Bruce Douglas and Crystal Ashley who recorded our session; Kieron Boyle for many hours of support in producing the AV materials.

Those who have helped to make the ideas and messages from this dissertation visible are:

Amos Paran, who invited me to submit a section of Chapter 8 for a book of edited papers;

Sue Dymoke - for inviting me to submit a section of Chapter 7 for the journal *English in Education*; Hania Kryszewa - for inviting me to submit a section of Chapter 7 for the journal *Humanistic Language Teaching*; Alan Maley - for being an ally and editor throughout the writing of *Creative Poetry Writing* and *Storybuilding*, described in Chapter 7.

Most of all, thanks to my husband John Daniel, partner in poetry and story, with whom home is a haven of continuous learning in which everything is possible: and to my supervisor at the University of Bath Jack Whitehead, a true fellow traveller whose guidance and inspiration has made this long journey a joyful one in which I never lost sight of a destination.

Abstract

How I have arrived at a notion of knowledge transformation, through understanding the story of myself as creative writer, creative educator, creative manager, and educational researcher.

My aim in this thesis is to tell the story/stories of how I arrived at a living theory of creativity which I shall call 'knowledge transformation'. I explore this theory through 'story' as a methodology that connects both the creative writer and action researcher, and raises questions about self, reflective process and voice that are central to my enquiry. In telling these stories, I ask the question: what does it mean to be creative, as a writer, an educator and a manager? Is the nature of creativity transferable across each of these roles? How has this knowledge improved my practice as an educator? My examination leads to a theory of learning called 'knowledge transformation', which suggests that deep learning leads to change of both the learner and what is learnt. My premise is that 'knowledge transformation' involves the capacity to respond to challenge, self and other, and is central to the notion of creativity. I consider how far this capacity can be transferable, teachable and measurable in educational contexts, arriving at a notion of 'scaffolded creativity' which is demonstrated through practice in the higher academy. My journey towards and with this theory draws on my experience of four personae, the creative writer in and outside the academy, and the educator, team leader, and researcher within it; and explores the strategies and issues raised by bringing these roles and intelligences together. This theory of 'knowledge transformation' represents an aspirational contribution to our understanding of what it means to be 'creative'. It explores how educational objectives can lead to deep learning and positive change. It also explores how values can be clarified in the course of their emergence and formed into living standards of judgment.

99, 407 words

Section A The sources of belief

What are the sources of belief that shape my practice as an educator?

How do these form the foundation for my concept of knowledge transformation?

Chapter One Introduction: story sources and starting points

1.1 What are my concerns in this thesis?

My aim in this thesis is to tell the story/stories of how I arrived at a living theory of creativity which I shall call ‘knowledge transformation’. I explore this theory through story, as a methodology that connects both the creative writer and action researcher, and raises questions about self, reflective process and voice that are central to my enquiry. I have chosen action research as the paradigm which offers me most opportunity, because “what is special about action research is that it allows people the flexibility to make up their own story as they go along ---- Each one of us is free to choose the song that we sing and how we sing it” (McNiff with Whitehead and Laidlaw 1992: 7). My song/story derives from four roles as writer, teacher, educational manager and researcher. The specific understandings I am searching for through these stories are:

- What does it mean to be creative across these varied roles?
- How is my own practice improved and enhanced, by understanding these connections?
- What theory emerges as a result of this enquiry and how do I know that this theory is lived, experienced, and meaningful to others as well as myself?

The research is driven by my belief that these roles do indeed powerfully and positively inform one another, even though institutions and educational environments often try to separate them. I arrive at, and offer as my contribution to knowledge, a theory of learning called *knowledge transformation*. This theory poses the idea that learning which is ‘educational’ and ‘creative’ leads to change of both the learner and what is learnt. My premise is that ‘education’ informed by this view of learning, involves the capacity to respond to challenge, self and other: and leads to positive change, spiritual, intellectual, practical or experiential. My belief is that when learning *transforms* knowledge, it extends well beyond the specific context of learning and transfers into other life roles and skills. In this I am informed by my experience of the four roles/personae, and the ways in which my own learning in one role has led to

empowerment and guidance in the others. My enquiry asks: why, how, when and with what potential has this taken place?

The songs/stories, which form the ground of my enquiry, include these:

- The story of being a researcher and making journeys through and with one's own practice
- The story of personal history, and how these inform and offer threads into the present
- The story of storywriting: how *living* story and *created* story interlock
- The story of working and developing as a writer and as an educator in higher education
- The stories of my teaching community – language learners, student teachers, in-service teachers, and members of my teaching team
- Sharing the storywriting process with teachers and students
- The story of critical incidents in my own career as an educator
- The story of writing this dissertation

My claim to originality is that I arrive at a 'living' concept of 'knowledge transformation' through multidimensional reflection; as a teacher who is a learner, as a learner who is a teacher, as a manager who has been one of a subclass, as an employee who has been a manager, as a creative writer who has lived in an imaginative world and as a teacher/manager who has interfaced with institutional, national and international policy and educational change. I am my own informant into different perspectives, and am able through these personae to have dialogue between several positions and arrive at a concept that is tested and lived from several perspectives.

1.2 Why am I concerned?

My research question emerged first as the experience of fragmentation and disconnection, “an attempt to recognize and reintegrate as a result of disintegration” (Biesta 2006: 27). This dis-integration was the experience of two energies and capacities, driven apart by the nature of learning within the institutions where I had been a learner and teacher: the capacity to create as a poet, storyteller and musician “not in principle governed by pre-established rules, and (not) judged according to a determining judgement” but rather, as an artist “working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done” (Lyotard 1984: 81) . In contrast, success as learner and teacher required the capacity to conform to and absorb systems and rules, pass exams and follow the scripts of others (McNiff 1992:3). In a sense, this dis-integration arose from two different notions of the nature of learning: learning as the capacity to transform knowledge and make of it ‘something new’, and learning as the capacity to absorb and synthesise knowledge. My thesis as response, locates itself within current debates that reclaim creativity as an educational goal, central to the curriculum, to the training of teachers, and to a definition of learning. Three voices in recent ‘conversation’ represent where I too stand, in this debate.

It is a pity that the notion of ‘creativity’ in education has to be fought for or reclaimed, as it should be a central feature of teaching and learning. It is the crucial element in each generation’s renewal and enhancement of itself. Without it society would roll backwards. Human imagination and spirit are what drove civilisation forward. (Wragg 2005: 2)

I ask you to consider the inner life of the student who sits, often reluctantly, before you. Your task is to take that particular person into the living field of your discipline and in some way to change him by so doing. No transformation, no education! (Abbs 2003: 10)

Creativity develops the capacity to imagine the world differently We all need an ability not just to cope with change, but also to positively thrive on it and engineer it for ourselves. (Creative Partnerships 2003 - 2007 <http://www.creative-partnerships.com.aboutcp>)

As an educator over a 25-year career in different educational settings, I have been concerned for the student experience in that ‘freedom to change’ has become increasingly constrained by the demands of assessment and prescribed curriculum. I have been

concerned that the teacher capacity to ‘be themselves’ as educators and creators of the learning experience, has been minimised by institutional demands: to meet league tables which in themselves record only what is quantifiable and mainstream, and to match nationally given objectives and benchmarks. Finally, I celebrate the re-emergence of creativity in the rhetoric of education (Buckingham 2003, Buckingham and Jones 2001, CAPE 2004, QCA 2001, Robinson 2006 (NACCE), Creative Partnerships 2007, DES 2004) , but am concerned that its practice be guided by the insights of both creative practitioner and educator, rather than be reduced to further categories for measurement and judgement, separating teachers from their own autonomy and creative power.

The educators I have quoted above echo my own concerns, in the following specific ways. They suggest that the capacity to be ‘creative’ – or in my sense, to generate positive change – is essential to our progress as a community of fellow human beings. (Wragg 2005). Indeed, creativity

is essential, not only for science, but for the whole of life.
If you get stuck in a mechanical repetitious order, then you will degenerate. That is one of the problems that has grounded every civilisation. (Bohm 1998: 16)

Thus to limit opportunity in educational contexts is a matter of urgent concern. Pope suggests that creativity is a component of the healthy and balanced individual; the capacity to initiate and own change is part of what it is to be ‘sane’ in a community that increasingly appears to forgo emotional health for other values (Pope 2005). Secondly, for us to be educators, we need to be aware of our responsibility in this debate, and to consider our role in empowering learners to change, so that learning really makes a difference, both to the learner and to the knowledge base itself (Abbs 2003). Thirdly, creative learning goes far beyond specifically educational contexts; it is a capacity to live in the modern world and respond to its challenges and changes (Creative Partnerships 2007).

This dissertation will aim to make its own contribution to the debate, by exploring what *being creative* has meant for me in practice, how it has enhanced my own identity as

writer, educator and manager, and why and how I have been committed to sharing its transformative potential with students, trainee teachers, and my teaching team. As a creative writer I knew there were strategies and skills which had led me towards experiences of excitement and fulfilment which had not been replicated through my educational opportunities. As an educator in further and higher education settings, my efforts to bring these opportunities into classrooms for my learners were marginalised or subversive to the expectations of my role. I strongly believed that the one could and did inform the other, and the opportunity to do so would be, and was, enriching both for myself and my learners.

1.3 What is my methodology and why have I chosen it?

In a number of searches early in my career, I attempted to bring these two intelligences together using research methodologies that offered me distance and criticality, but placed my own experience outside the enquiry. All the searches, (MPhil Warburg Institute 1979, MA University of Reading 1986, PhD University of Bath 2007) asked at their heart the same question: what is the nature of creative intelligence and what conditions can make it develop and flower? Yet each approached the question from entirely different perspectives. In 1979 I approached my question as a humanities student using a social science paradigm; in 1986 I approached it again as an applied linguist using an empirical science paradigm. In 2008 the action research paradigm at last liberated me to focus on self as storyteller, rather than on the story of others (McNiff et al 1992: 7).

My first research (MPhil University of London) was a library-based one that gathered together poets' testimonies about their own practice, and from this extrapolated a theory of the balance between individual inspiration and disciplined craft. The dissertation firmly located itself within an epistemology that saw knowledge as a non-negotiable truth awaiting discovery, and was reached by the amassing of information extrinsic to self. .

It considers how far the poet was emerging in the sixteenth century as an individual freed from enslavement to the disciplines of theology and moral philosophy. His poetic faculties were coming to be equated, not with the mystical or irrational, but with reason and intellectual control.

(Spiro MPhil Warburg Institute 1978: Abstract)

Through publicly validated poets, I sought to explore what ‘learning’ had meant to them, how they had honed their craft, how they had combined reason and discipline with creative spontaneity. In reality, the study was a search for self legitimised through study of the other, removed in both time, place and gender. Throughout, the poets I studied were male and ‘he’ was the generic pronoun I used to describe the artist. My goal was “to describe, interpret or explain --without inducing any change” (Bassey 1992: 3), and the desired outcome was to offer the poet’s sense of self as further evidence of the Renaissance shift in world view. I wished this contribution to be deemed valid, objectively evidenced, and generalisable to other contemporary writer testimonies.

Several years later, and now with 5 years experience as a teacher in primary, further and higher education, I addressed the issue of creative practice again. This time I approached my question as an Applied Linguist through a Science paradigm, and with a focus on creativity as a stimulus to language development. My project involved recording children between 6 and 7 telling stories, both nursery tales and stories about their friends, pets, and home life and comparing specific linguistic and discourse patterns. This time I had a ‘testable hypothesis’ that children use linguistic patterns in stereotype story that go beyond their linguistic range in non-story contexts.

The study explores the influence of the narrative genre on the child’s command of language. The hypothesis is that children narrating stereotype nursery tales will display a more adult mastery of reference than in spontaneous narrative. ----the specific features studied are definite articles, pronouns and proper nouns. ---- The view is considered that differences in mastery of linguistic items may be due to the formal features of storytelling, unconsciously acquired by the child.

(Spiro MA University of Reading 1986: Abstract)

This project, compared to the other, came nearer to ‘lived’ experience; yet still, the requirement to fix, measure and test limited what I wanted to understand, and instead of uncovering the richness of the creative self, diminished it to a set of graphs and pi-charts showing the use of definite articles, pronouns and proper nouns (*given* versus *new* information) inside and outside story contexts.

The dissertations met expected criteria for scholarship and knowledge contribution, since both passed successfully through the Exam Boards; but whether I had really arrived at the answers, or the questions I wished to ask, remained in doubt. Some central engagement was missing, uneasy questions voiced by McNiff remained: “Are we living to fulfil other people’s expectations or our own? Is someone else writing the script or are we? Who creates our identities and for what purposes?” (McNiff 2002: 53). Was I really asking my own central question or taking account of my own experience and perceptions? The search for answers to these questions through documentation, texts, data collection and analysis, proved to offer certain insights but to be ultimately unsatisfactory in asking my own overarching question: why is creative practice important and how is this manifested in the role of writer, and the role of educator? In other words, something more than external data needed to be added to the mix: my own core values, the ‘slippery’ nature of experience and practice, my evolving response to these, and the formulation of my own theory emerging from lived practice.

The action research paradigm offered the possibility of understanding the processes deeply from the ground of my own experience and values, bringing together creative and educational roles explicitly, in a theorised way. The action research model searches in the way I consider truly important: because it is grounded in experience (Eisner 1988; Johnson and Golombek 2005); because it leads to explicit and meaningful change (McNiff, Whitehead and Laidlaw 1992); because it permits the generation of personal theory rather than being moulded by the theory of others; and because it offers the opportunity to bring together personal voice and the voice of the academic community (Atweh, Kemmis and Weeks 1998, Carson and Sumara 1997, Coghlan and Brannick 2000, McNiff 2002, Stringer 2003, Zuber-Skerrit 1996).

In the process my career has moved towards extraordinary new challenges in response to this change in self and self-esteem. In 2002 I was a language teacher and educator working in a Language Centre that was peripheral to the academic life of a University; in 2004 I was promoted to Head of Applied Linguistics, and in 2007, promoted again to

Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator in Education, with a specific remit for developing partnerships between schools and creative practitioners. The question of how to bring together the roles of creative writer, creative educator, manager and researcher, has been profoundly lived and experienced through the five year process of writing this dissertation, and is a testimony to the nature of action research as an agent for change, empowerment and democratisation.

What action research can claim to do

This thesis is able to make a number of claims, which are characteristic of the action research paradigm.

It can claim to be an agent of change.

It can claim to be a testimony of lived and living practice.

It can claim to connect theory and practice in a way that is not derivative of others.

It can claim to work from the local and specific, and to derive meaning and implication from these.

It can claim to connect *I* and *we* (McNiff 1992: 56) – how my own practice interfaces with the learning and teaching of others.

It can claim to be trustworthy on its own terms and to offer insights into the specific which the reader will be free to connect with or not. (Bassey 2001)

What action research cannot claim to do

It cannot claim to offer final truths or completed stories.

It cannot claim to offer data that is valid in terms of quantity, or objectivity, or watertight inviolability.

It cannot claim to provide insights which can be reliably generalised to other contexts or settings.

It cannot claim to provide watertight explanations of ‘they’ or ‘other’.

It cannot claim that knowledge is fully achievable, or separate from interpretation and researcher response.

Research into creativity as a process, phenomena and skill, has claimed some of this territory. Objective studies have:

- identified different stages of learner progression towards creative independence based on observation of child development (Cromptley 2001, Craft 2000, Boden 1990) (social science paradigm)
- identified neurophysical and cognitive activity in the brain of children deemed to be gifted and creative, and measured these comparative to other activity (Geake 2007, 2006, Carruthers 2002) (science paradigm)
- identified the link between rewards and standards of creative productivity amongst 7 – 10 year olds (Birdwhistell 2000) (social science paradigm)
- identified criteria for clines of literariness, based on reader evaluations of text types and their evaluation of its creative qualities (Carter 2006) (arts/humanities paradigm)
- identified the broad range of interpretations of the term ‘creative’ in sciences, arts and social sciences, based on documentation and texts (Pope 2005) (arts/humanities paradigm)

In contrast, my own thesis does not claim to present data that would be replicable by or generalisable to other writers, readers or educators. To claim this would be an absurdity, since the nature of my data is its specificity. As a creative writer exploring my own process, it is clear that any insights I might arrive at based on experience, are likely to be true only for themselves and generalisable only as far as the reader is prepared to make the compassionate leap. To attempt the ‘generalisable’ might also be to attempt the bland, the depersonalised and the non-specific, and to dumb down the unique and idiosyncratic. Bassey questions the idea of ‘generalisability’ as a notion that limits and deadens the learning that derives from the specific (Bassey 1993). His notion of ‘fuzzy generalisability’ suggests instead a ‘best estimate of trustworthiness’ that makes claims simply for a place within the study of the human condition. Ethnography talks of the value of ‘thick data’ which pays attention to the mundane and ordinary as characteristics of the whole. (Morrison 2007). In my explorations as both researcher and writer, I have found the local and specific, to be the features which have most *compassionate* meaning - to create the capacity for identification, rather than for generalisation, the capacity for

infinite interpretation rather than for objectivity. For example, the tightly delineated character, deeply embedded in time or place, will be more likely to ‘make sense’ to the reader, and be ‘meaningful’ in a deep sense, than the bland and broad character that seeks to have global relevance. So rich is this ‘story-like’ information for the researcher, that the ethnographer Geertz described himself as a “novelist manque” and added “I’ve often been accused of making anthropology just into literature, but I don’t believe I’m doing that. Anthropology is also field research and so on, but writing is central to it” (Olson interview of Geertz 2006: 3). History is more fully understood, not through the broad generalisation, nor ‘the telling of one unified story by one-who-knows, but an accumulation of multiple stories, told by people themselves’ (McNiff 2002: 3).

What is my data and how did I arrive at it?

My data, then, derives from *I*, not *they*. It claims variety and complexity, rather than statistical quantity. It celebrates subjectivity, in that it derives from my own perceptions of key moments in my writing/teaching pathway. It also claims connection between *I* and *we*, in that the voices of readers, students, trainee teachers, colleagues, are included in the journey. It includes:

autobiographical data such as diaries, childhood poems and stories, and commentaries on critical incidents, which provide evidence of the transformation from ‘lived’ to ‘created’ story, from concurrent experience to retrospective reflection. (Chapters 3 - 6, Chapters 10 and 11)

novel, poems and plays, writings melded into educational projects including short stories written in controlled language for language learners, television programmes on interfaith issues for Carlton television, plays written as part of a museum education programme,. (Chapters 4, 5 and 6) (**Appendix Readings Section 1: Creative writer: storymaking and Audio-Visual files 2 and 3**)

educational outcomes including teacher resources, assessment cycles, programme development, student evaluations, recorded workshops, and two books for

teachers written and published during the PhD writing process. (Chapters 7, 8 and 9) (**Appendix Readings Section 2: Creative educator: teacher resources and student voices and Audio-Visual files 1 and 5**).

articles published and shared within the academy, on assessment, story, language teaching methodology, teacher narratives and the interlocking of creativity and criticism (Chapters 7, 8, 9 and 11) (**Appendix Readings Section 3: Talking to the academy**)

the testimonies of students, trainee teachers, colleagues and team members (Chapters 7, 8, 9 and 11) (**Audio-Visual files 4 and Appendix Readings Section 3**)

In presenting this as data, as the source and resource of understanding, I am claiming a place within the third culture described by Geertz:

when critics divide the world into real scientists and real (or "unreal," usually) humanists and decide that this gulf is an absolute-the two-cultures notion-I think that all of what I do and a good deal of what other people in the social sciences do just drops through the cracks because it's a *third* culture, a *different* sort of thing. (Olson interview with Geertz 2006: 12).

I present the data in this thesis as an 'ongoing negotiation' (Clifford and Marcus 1986) because I return to history/story several times from different perspectives, with a child and an adult's insight, with a fiction-writer, a researcher and a teacher's voice. The data is 'slippery' and 'soft', what Geertz as novelist-anthropologist calls 'fictitious constructions --- not inviolable unassailable statements of "a scientific truth' (Geertz 2006: 12). Without this capacity for revisiting and reinterpretation, the profound insights that the data has allowed me to find, and the change this has generated, would not have taken place.

1.4 What are the core values which inform my practice?

In the sections above, I have suggested the importance of seeing connections between my roles as creative writer, educator, manager and educational researcher. The section that follows affirms the values which connect these roles and which have helped me to navigate the paradoxes between and within them. These values have emerged in the course of interfacing with a career in higher education, and have been honed, tested and made explicit through engagement with its challenges.

Well being

- 1) I have a responsibility to preserve my own well-being, so my actions are fuelled by an energy which is capable of recharging itself, rather than by a negative and draining energy. It is only in this way, that creative responses can continue to be sustained.

In this, I am aware of notions of wellbeing beginning to emerge in school curriculum (OfSTED 2005, Baylis and Morris 2007, Ecclestone 2007), and of wellbeing as an emerging principle in economics and social policy (ESRC 2005, Deneulin and Townsend 2006).

Connection

- 2) I have a responsibility to derive lessons from all aspects of past experience, whether positive or negative: and to be inclusional in my revisiting of this experience, rather than selecting only what illustrates a theory or fits a paradigm.
- 3) I strongly believe in the notion of the global citizen who is not defined by nationality or religion, and who does not define others in this way.
- 4) However, I am aware of the specificity of the individual in time and place, and the specificity of individual experience. Thus whilst we tell the single story of the human condition, we tell a million stories and each are uniquely different and enriching.
- 5) Whilst being fully present in the moment and able to respond to the detail of what forms the moment, part of this mindfulness is understanding the many threads that lead from past to present and shape where we are now. It is possible to honour our personal and collective history whilst living fully in the present.

Empathy

- 6) I am energised through interaction and empathy with others, and this interaction is a major source of learning. In this, I am inspired by others who recognise the interface of I and other, and in particular, Buber's notion of 'I and thou' (Buber 1998) and Magonet's notion of 'talking to the other' (Magonet 2003) .
- 7) I empathise with others, by briefly travelling outside my own ego: in other words, by learning not to hear only what I know already, wish to hear, or would be convenient to hear. This is my goal and I am continually learning from others as to whether it is being achieved.
- 8) I also empathise with others, by seeing my own connection with them, however far they have travelled from my own position. In this, I am inspired by Mandela (1994) whose view of the liberation of South Africa included empathy for his oppressors and the desire for their liberation too.
- 9) I also empathise with others, by recognising the patterns which they and I are part of historically and socially.
- 10) It is also my belief that this empathy only makes sense through transformation in the real and material world: and that we fulfil this, in a way that is unique and specific to our abilities, skills and beliefs. In this, I am inspired by examples of empathy manifested through transformational action, as in the notion of 'microlending' developed by the Nobel Prizewinner Mohammed Yunus (Brown 2002).

Empowerment.

- 11) My role as educator is to provide a rich environment that empowers learners to find and express their own voice.
- 12) My own pursuit is to find the fullest expression of my own voice as it evolves.

Authenticity

- 13) I am only prepared to act through these beliefs, rather than through desire for power, status, recognition, or fashion. I regard my own authenticity as acting always in congruence with these beliefs , and wherever they are compromised or threatened I will seek repair and resolution, however hard-earned these might be.

For me, the qualities of the spirit, and the complexity of values and beliefs through which these are realised, are only truly brought into being when tested in the material world. The place where I stand is most truly tested through interface with the four roles I play in the academic world.

1.5 The four personae: inner and outer paradoxes

I represent these as different personae, because at many stages in an academic career they have appeared to be, not merely in conflict with one another, but internally problematic and paradoxical too. Inside these roles, we may be driven by a sense of purpose, self-esteem and idealism: yet outsiders such as non-educators, the consumers of education, and policy-makers, often view these same roles with hostility or contempt. Living with this paradox is part of what every educator will do; but even more so will this be the case, when the educator attempts to bring in to their practice other roles and ideologies which are not traditionally valued or visible within the academy. Johnston (2003) describes the wide discrepancy between English language teachers' sense of their own professional identity, and that of their institutions. In his interviews with English teachers, a key source of stress was the experience of being regarded as a 'commodity' by their institutions, whilst experiencing for themselves a high degree of dedication and professionalism. Munro (1998) describes the paradoxical self-images of women teachers, who value their teaching experience highly whilst feeling they are perceived as unimportant and unskilled.

The descriptions below summarise my own experiences of paradox in the four roles germane to this thesis:

the creative writer

creative commentator deriving inspiration from the world in its complexity and specificity, who highlights, subverts and reinvents systems and whose creative outcomes are socially engaged

alongside

the dreamer, whose inspiration and outcomes are disconnected with the ‘real world’, absorbed in a fictional universe, an anarchist unprepared to conform to institutions, regulations and constricting protocol

In this I am influenced by the range of questions addressed in the literature about creativity, and summarised by Banerji, Burn and Buckingham (2006) and Pope (2005), and writers’ testimonies of their own identities: (Sartre 1964, Pamuk 2006, Conrad 1920, Allende 2007, Updike 2007, Cocteau 1952).

the educator

a mentor, guide, facilitator, one who empowers, offers opportunities, gives others voice, opens doorways, changes lives

alongside

an assessor, judge, authoritarian, rule-bound, concerned with outcomes and not with processes, with uniformity and conformity.

In this, I am influenced by Marshall (1999) who describes the different positions of the academic within the institution, from conformity to ‘tempered radical’, and the educator who chooses to effect change from within.

the manager

one who facilitates and enhances the professional self-esteem and effectiveness of others, a team-builder, mentor, facilitator, visionary, problem-solver for self and others, as role-model, guide and critical friend, able to prioritise, support, inspire, think positively, lead and drive forward: one who priorities *where we are going*

alongside

one who controls and manages detail and complexity: local, current, ‘on the ground’, one who prioritises *where we are now*

In this I am influenced by the distinction between ‘leader’ and ‘manager’ described by Kotter (2001) and Senge (2000). I am also mindful of much research which reinforces

my own experience of alienation as a woman from certain, traditionally ‘masculine’ management styles. (Thomas 1995, Pagano 1990, Marshall 1984, Tannen 2001).

the educational researcher

one who places *I* at the centre of enquiry, records experience concurrent to its evolution and recognises its primacy as a resource for learning and development (Eisner 1998, Whitehead and McNiff 2006)

alongside

one who places *they* at the centre of enquiry, and seeks objectivity by distancing from self, and by attempting interpretation of data which is value-free

Another way in which I may define myself in the academy, is through a series of metaphors and dichotomies or polarities:

- teacher as releaser and midwife (Abbs 2003: 15)
- teacher as co-ordinator, conductor and democrat
- teacher as cultural guardian and initiator into symbolic life
- teaching as positive identity development (Stables 2003)
- teacher as demonstrating wellbeing, or responsibility to self
- teacher as demonstrating empathy, or responsibility to other
- teaching as an ushering in of opportunity
- justice versus caring
- solidarity versus authority
- tolerance and compassion versus zero tolerance of uncollegiality
- flexibility versus decisiveness
- transparency versus discretion
- impartiality versus emotional congruity and engagement
- loyalty to one’s employer versus loyalty towards one’s peers

(Johnston 2003)

It is in experiencing and attempting to resolve these dichotomies that my own ideology and belief system have been made apparent. I offer these as polarities rather than

paradoxes, in that for me they represent a continuum along which educators need to locate themselves in continuous fine-tuned response to each situation. This does not mean that myself in particular, or the principled educator in general, is simply blown by the winds of each situation. What has determined my own response in each case, is congruence with core beliefs and fully lived theories.

The section below shows how the thesis as a whole tells the story of these core values. It demonstrates how they have been expressed through a career in higher education, and how, through researching their impact on my practice, the theory of *knowledge transformation* emerges.

1.6 The journey towards ‘knowledge transformation’

Section A The framework: the sources of belief

Connection: Section A lays the foundation for this dissertation by deconstructing its central concepts: story, creativity and knowledge transformation. These are explored as concepts clarified through my own practice as a reader, writer and researcher.

Chapter 1 presents the central aims of the dissertation, and shows how core values, experience and research questions connect with one another.

Chapter 2 offers a rationale for story as the connecting principle in this dissertation, and explores its meaning as methodology and as resource. It describes the ways in which other voices form the ground and stimulus for my own, and have been ‘transformed’ into my own knowledge.

Chapter 3 Weaving stories explores the meaning of the term ‘creative’ and arrives at a statement of my own meanings for this term, and a rationale for my use of it through this dissertation. It also shows how lived story became created stories between the ages of 6 to 12, and explores what is revealed about emerging beliefs and creative processes through these early childhood writings.

Section B I as creative writer

Connection and Empathy: Section B explores the way in which empathy for others can be, and is, a creative resource, an essential component of the fiction-writer's capacity to make story explore and comment on life.

Chapter 4 Writing as finding a voice explores the ways in which the process of creative writing, and specifically the writing of my novel, led me away from personal experience and towards a 'voice' that was both more my own, and more 'universal'. In so doing, the process of 'transformation' of experience from lived to created story is further explored.

I empathise with others by travelling outside my own ego, by seeing my connection with others, and by recognising the patterns which they and I are part of historically and socially.

Chapter 5 Writing for audience shares the process of developing stories for language learners, by submitting to the constraints of word lists, structure lists and sentence counts; specifically with reference to 4 volumes of stories written or reissued during the writing of this dissertation. *Empathy only makes sense through transformation in the real and material world.*

Chapter 6 Writing for performance considers the development of 6 interfaith television programmes and a 2-hour theatre reading, conceived, researched and presented by me, in which practitioners of different faiths share and compare their attitude to prayer, rest, life rituals and cultural history. *I strongly believe in the notion of the global citizen, while also being aware of the specificity of the individual in time and place.*

Section C I as creative educator

Empowerment: Section C explores the ways in which I as educator have seen my role as the facilitator of learners' voices, providing a rich environment for these to flourish, and how this environment has been adaptable, measurable and accountable within the academy.

Chapter 7 Learning to change demonstrates the ways in which I have guided learners towards expressing and making public their voices, scaffolding the process of creativity

so this journey is achievable in a second or foreign language and for students who have never before found their voice creatively

Chapter 8 Making our stories accountable in the academy explores the way in which the process of ‘transformation’ can be expressed precisely through educational objectives, and the issues and dilemmas which emerge in assessing and measuring it.

Chapter 9 Teaching to change demonstrates the ways in which I have guided teachers to examine and develop their own practice, locating this process within the academy and within its constraints and expectations; specifically with reference to two projects with language teachers.

Section D I as creative manager

Wellbeing and authenticity : Section D explores the struggle to retain wellbeing and authenticity to these guiding principles, within the pressures and conflicting values of the higher academy. It also explores the process of providing a ground for wellbeing in my own practice, and of managing this for others as Head of Department.

Chapter 10 Story as crisis explores the experience of redundancy in the higher academy as critical incident. It reflects on the strategies deployed for preserving self and self-esteem, and using trauma as self-development and a stepping stone for a deeper understanding of positive management.

Chapter 11 Management as transformation explores the ways in which my career projectory led eventually to promotion as Head of Applied Linguistics, and the ways in which I have used creative principles in this role to manage conflict and develop a positive and professional team spirit in my academic group.

Section E Knowledge transformation and the academy

Chapter 12 Threading stories together: knowledge transformation as living theory summarises the ways in which all the examples above connect and demonstrate ‘deep learning’ , arriving eventually at a notion of *knowledge transformation*, validated by students, colleagues, managers and writers, and being my contribution to current knowledge and to the academy.

1.7 By what criteria do I wish to be judged?

In defining the criteria by which I wish to be judged, I am influenced by Furlong and Oancea in their enterprise of ‘defin(ing) what good quality is in educational research’. (Furlong and Oancea 2005: 4) . These are the criteria to which I choose to be answerable:

Methodological and theoretical robustness and rigour

- **Trustworthiness:** “We must provide reasons why others should trust our findings.” (Feldman 2003: 7). Bassey (2001) defines reasons to trust research, in terms of “who may use it – and how useful it may be to them” (2001:1). In the case of this dissertation, my claim to trust is that other educators may recognise aspects of themselves here, and that the insights that have improved my practice may offer insights for their practice too.
- **Contribution to knowledge:** ‘research should build on what is known and contribute to it’ (Furlong and Oancea 2005: 12). Here I claim to locate my research within current knowledge and debates and to contribute something new to our collective understandings and in full knowledge of these.
- **Explicitness in designing and reporting:** Habermas (1976) emphasises the importance of choosing “a comprehensible expression so that speaker and hearer can understand one another” (Habermas 1976: 2-3). My claim is to make my strategies explicit for my reader so that connections and messages can be heard clearly.
- **Connection between theory and practice:** my claim is to explore the interdependence of theory and practice, as “complementary phases of the change process:----- theory, being based in practice, (and) transformed by the transformations of practice.’ (Winter 1989: Chap. 4)

Value for use

- **Specificity and accessibility:** Is my discussion focused, specific and concrete enough to be meaningful to other practitioners?

- **Impact of research:** Have I shown that the research has had an impact on my profession and effected change in some way that has enriched students and other practitioners in my field?

Capacity building or value for people

- **Reflection and criticality:** Have I demonstrated the capacity to reflect rigorously and honestly on self and others, and to exercise critical judgement in my observations of self and others? Do I have clear criteria for judgement which I stand by?
- **Receptivity:** Have I been open to the responses and experiences of others and the ways they might impact on my own?
- **Stimulating personal growth:** Have I demonstrated that genuine personal change and development has taken place through this ‘living theory’, for both myself and others.

In addition to these, I would like to add criteria of my own, specific to the enquiries in this dissertation.

- Has my creative writer/educator/manager role generated actual change? curriculum change, change in my own workplace, change in the professional community as a whole: and if so, how?
- In threading all the multiple stories of this dissertation together, do they form a coherent and meaningful picture?
- Does the theory of *knowledge transformation* emerge as embodied, lived, practiced and tested?

My task and goal is no less than one of transformation, and it is according to this that I wish to judge and be judged.

1.8 Towards a notion of knowledge transformation

The term ‘knowledge transformation’ is not new in educational literature. Welchmann (2001) uses the term to describe the ‘decolonising’ of pedagogies for indigenous Oceanic communities, such that they are empowered to write and publish in their own local and native languages. Desforges (2001) uses it in a very different sense, to describe learning strategies which “represent old knowledge as well as acquisition of new knowledge” (Desforges 2001: Abstract). English Language teachers use the term ‘knowledge transformation’ broadly to describe listening and reading tasks in which the learner ‘changes’ the information heard or read into a new form: for example, a text into words in a chart, or labels for a diagram.

These uses touch on, but are no more than starting points for the living theory I aim to expound in this dissertation. My ‘living theory’ places change at the centre.

Knowledge transformation reveals itself when the ‘knowledge’ or skill communicated between educator and learner, is actually transformed by the learner and becomes something new. In the process of making this change, personalising the knowledge and making it into something new, the learner her/himself is also changed. The change may be expressed as an expansion in understanding, in self confidence, in independence, in self discovery, in motivation to do or say something new, in the shape and scope of knowledge itself in the learner’s mind and what the learner can then do with this.

Chapter One has explored the questions and the values that are central to this dissertation and that guide its form and shape. It has also suggested the notion of *knowledge transformation* as a living theory emerging from multiple roles. The chapter has also begun to explore the sources of belief and the experiences from which they derive. The chapters that follow will explore these sources in more detail, from the perspective of **connection**. Chapter Two explores my reading history, and how the stories and histories of others have helped to shape my own. Chapter Three considers the connection between childhood stories as they are remembered now in adulthood and for the purposes of self-study; and childhood writings which offer a window into the evolution of values and the process of creativity.

Chapter Two **Connecting stories: from reading to beliefs**

Connection

I am aware of the specificity of the individual in time and place, and the specificity of individual experience. Thus, whilst we tell the single story of the human condition, we tell a million stories and each are uniquely different and enriching.

This thesis grounds itself in a number of reading landscapes. Some of these were explored in Chapter One, but this chapter considers in more detail the way in which story has informed my practice as writer: reader/researcher, and explores the connections between stories. This **connectivity** can be explored as metaphor: a New England quilt is formed by a tessellation of fabrics, each of a different colour, pattern, texture, and derived from another place which has its own history. So, for example, one piece might come from the tablecloth of a country farmer's home, another from the first blanket of a child, another from the pawned wedding dress of a young girl, another from the coat of a favourite doll, another from the curtains of a closed down guest house. Before they are stitched together, they form a cacophony of different colours, styles, patterns, textures, like a random crowd of people caught in the snapshot of a busy city. But when stitched together, each piece paves the way in shape and form, for another: the colours begin to chime or bounce off one another. They invite the eye to make links and comparisons, to see patterns and disparities: one pattern shows off another, echoes another. Not only this, but once all the pieces are together in this way, they form a single entity which is not only beautiful and unique, but is also functional. On their own, each single piece is in danger of being just a fragment: but all together they have a role to play. They cover a bed, keep a child warm, decorate a table or wall. They are seen as a single piece with many parts.

The stories in this dissertation interlock and ask questions in the same way; how do stories accumulate in power through connection? What can stories *do* in the world – do they have a purpose beyond themselves? How do imagined and real stories connect and why is our experience enriched by the permeability between these? A diversity of reading landscapes have fed into my understanding of the lived, created and learnt. Amongst these are: story as interpreted by child and adult, narrative and authorial voice as perceived by adult reader/writer, and story universals that connect literary and lived experience. This chapter will unravel these reading landscapes and

attempt to connect them so that they ‘speak’ to one another in a way that transforms and generates new meanings.

2.1 Story as methodology, story as resource

I referred in earlier sections of this dissertation, to story as a methodology and story as a resource. This section will explore what I mean by this, and how this connects with the role of story in this dissertation.

The methodology of story involves the recounting of experience. It presupposes connection between events through causality, consequence or sequence. Yet a story is more than a simple chronology of events, in that it involves an emotional, moral or philosophical investment by the author. “Something genuine is at stake in a story” (Bullough and Pinnegar 2001:17), whether we are telling our own or engaging in another’s. Story, too, involves a ‘narrative intelligence’ (Denning 2000), in that it takes account of audience and is honed to communicate and generate empathy. This concession to audience involves shared assumptions about narrative discourse; how elements of story connect or disconnect, how far logic and sequence are presupposed, how far consistency and probability are required or suspended (Genette 1980, Barthes 1996, Toolan 2001, Manfred 2005). We are able to say what is unique and specific through recognisable and shared frameworks; in other words, to form a bridge between inner voice and outer voice, between inner reader and outer reader.

Story is also a resource in that from it emerge values, beliefs, patterns and assumptions which are revealed not only to the reader, but to the storyteller too. The richness of story is that these values are often expressed symbolically, metaphorically, or notionally, so ‘truths’ are displaced and coded. Thus story can offer a connecting window between surface language and discourse patterns and the subliminal and unconscious. We can learn not only *from* story or personal narrative, but *through* it. This recognition of story as a learning resource is apparent in our attempts to understand social history, communities and cultures, as well as our attempts to explore the individual’s inner and outer worlds. Cortazzi (2006), Kirkpatrick (2002) and Geertz (1983) are example of ethnographers who draw on story to understand social and sociolinguistic patterns. In this, there is recognition that a community is

understood through connecting the stories of those inside it. “In the course of engaging with stories, ---- we are beginning to discover the process is a social one” (Elbaz 1992: 432), because through them we can understand more fully a community’s patterns, discourses, systems and its functionality or disfunctionality. Amongst these stories, are those of teachers, whose life stories offer insights into educational values and meanings and have become validated as a rich resource for educational understanding (Tripp 1993, Thomas 1995, Bruner 2002, Doecke, Homer and Nixon 2003, Aoki 2004, Johnson and Golombek 2005, Day et al 2007). Story too, is recognised as a resource for the understanding of emotional health (Gersie and King 1990, Hunt 2000, Anderson and MacCurdy 2000, Angwin 1994) and as an agent of change in organisational settings (Shank 1990, Fisher, Rooke and Torbert 2000). We can ask: what accounts for the power of story as a resource, and its transferability into so many contexts and disciplines: education, mental health, organisational psychology, ethnography, social history? My own belief is that story, in all its specificity, offers quintessential insights into the human condition. It is a place of “genuine meetings” in which our “own relation to truth is heightened by the other’s different relation to the same truth” (Buber 1998: 59). Story is a place where we can find ourselves through others, and find others through connecting with ourselves.

2.2 Story and researching the self

Action research liberates the researcher to analyse their own story as a starting point, rather than end point; and to be explicit in how the story of other and the story of self connect (Clandinin and Connelly 2000, Witherall and Noddings 2001). McNiff describes action research as “honour(ing) the right of people to speak and act on their own behalf” (ibid: 10). It “begins in people’s minds as they make choices about which values to espouse and how to live in the direction of these values” and places “the living I at the centre of our enquiries”. (ibid: 22). Yet there are typical criticisms that could be directed at the ‘I’ centred researcher. From the purely narrative point of view, it is clear that a single perspective on a story will be limited and skewed. A creative writer choosing the ‘I’ persona is well aware that in doing so, he/she closes down the inner worlds of his/her other characters and thus limits the ‘roundness’ of the reader’s experience. Anthony Trollope writes:

It is always dangerous to write from the point of ‘I’. The reader is unconsciously taught to feel that the writer is glorifying himself

and rebels against the self-praise. (Trollope in Allott 1959: 260).

Henry James describes this as “the terrible fluidity of self-revelation” (James in Allott: 261). So it is with any monodimensional story. In describing multifaith dialogue between Jews, Christians and Moslems, Magonet cites Lippmann:

The complexity of modern civilization is a daily lesson in the necessity of not pressing any claim too far, of understanding opposing points of view, of seeking to reconcile them, of conducting matters so that there is some kind of harmony in a plural society. (Magonet 2003: 16)

Understanding story, understanding history, is a recognition of multiplicity. This is a truth we can readily embrace. But where does it leave the individual and what he/she uniquely has to offer? In this dilemma of the ‘storyteller’ and action researcher, between self and other, the philosopher who has offered for me the most answers is Buber. Buber resolves the dilemma between finding self: finding the other, by showing that human beings are *most essentially themselves* through interaction with others.

The fundamental fact of human existence is neither the individual as such nor the aggregate as such. Each, considered by itself, is a mighty abstraction. The individual is a fact of existence in so far as he steps into a living relation with other individuals. The aggregate is a fact of existence in so far as it is built up of living units of relation. **That essence of man which is special to him can be directly known only in a living relation.** (Buber: 1988: 7)

He develops the theory further in describing “the principle of human life” as twofold: “the primal setting at a distance” and “the second entering into relation” (ibid: 50). This duality is one that lies at the heart of the story: history, story, personal narrative, action research. The roundedness in each of these accounts, will lie in the capacity to combine distance with engagement: and to make this engagement an exploration of self and self-through-others. How am I in interaction with others? How are they in interaction with me? What evidence do I have for each of these?

Herein, then, lies a broad personal definition of effective ‘action research’: to place “the living I at the centre of our enquiries” and yet at the same time, to show that

the living I is most essentially itself through engagement with others. How can this best be done? Bullough and Pinnegar cite Wright Mills:

many personal troubles cannot be solved merely as troubles, but must be understood in terms of public issues and in terms of the problems of history-making.

(Wright Mills C. in Bullough and Pinnegar 2001:14)

So, an effective personal narrative will deconstruct ‘personal troubles’ as public ones; it will politicise observations to show the interaction between myself and the systems, contexts, cultural norms in which I work. How do I do this?

- by identifying my work within the institution within which it derived, and acknowledging the impact of this on my work
- by acknowledging the impact of colleagues and their attitudes to me and my work
- by revealing the “inherently unstable and problematic nature” of my work (McNiff with Whitehead 2002: 4)
- by showing how I work with the duality of distance and engagement: in institutional terms, with the role of “tempered radical” that is “simultaneously outsider and insider” (Marshall 1999: 3), seeking to change institutions while remaining inside them (often in positions of invisibility or powerlessness). This chapter will make explicit the systems I worked within, why I chose to change them, what the constraints were that limited change, and how I used these constraints themselves as change-agents.

Chapter One described science and social science research paradigms in which validity was mutually understood and demonstrable: but what is the standard of validity, when a distanced, objectified notion of data has been replaced by the ‘central I’, and methods of expression are individually determined? Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) offer guidelines for the action researcher engaged in self-study. These are practical guidelines which are underpinned by the notion of research as a universalised story in which, as cited earlier, “something genuine is at stake” (Bullough and Pinnegar 2001:17). Here Bullough and Pinnegar echo the creative writer who, also, searches for the ‘genuine’, the leap of self, into his/her story. Here is Joseph Conrad, for example, describing his process of creating *The Secret Agent*:

There must have been, however, some sort of atmosphere in the whole incident because all of a sudden I felt myself stimulated. And then ensued in my mind what a student of chemistry would best understand from the analogy of the tiniest little drop of the right kind, precipitating the process of crystallisation in a test tube containing some colourless solution. It was at first for me a mental challenge, disturbing a quieted-down imagination, in which strange forms, sharp in outline but imperfectly apprehended, appeared and claimed attention as crystals will do by their bizarre and unexpected shapes. ----- There was room enough there to place any story, depth enough there for any passion, variety enough there for any setting, darkness enough to bury five millions of life. ----- (Conrad 1920: 6)

A core reason why the researcher should engage with story, is its potential for universality. Our own engagement elicits the engagement of others, the compassionate leap mentioned in Chapter One, which enables the reader to recognise, identify and empathise.

To summarise the subtext of this section:

we can learn about generating good action research, through the strategies of good story-making: we need to be rounded and unbiased in the information we give, emotionally engaged and yet fully informed. We are *story-makers*.

we can learn about good action research, through story itself as our resource, our data, our learning catalyst. What is remembered, selected, and why?

What patterns and connections emerge and what do these teach us? We are *story-readers*.

2.3 The story and authorial voice

Section 2.2 considered story at the level of content choices and authorial point of view. This section will look at the implications of these decisions for the writer, at the level of text, language, and surface voice. Section 2.1 mentioned story as a connector between inner voice and outer voice, but what are the refinements and complexities of this when these voices are complex, and function at multiple levels?

In symbolic terms, every writer deals with the same tension between the personal, inner voice and the ‘voice’ of the ‘other’ culture. However we experience this, we are all somehow negotiating a ‘first language’ in a ‘second language’ culture: whether

this ‘second language’ is another register, another community or culture, the discourse of the opposite gender, the culture of the company or academy. In other words, we all have domains in which we are ‘insiders’, and domains where we experience the conventions as outsiders.

What can the creative writer do with this tension, that the journalist, or literary critic, or advertising copywriter cannot do? He/she can:

- create a personally constructed ‘interlanguage’ that falls in between the personal, inner voice, and the dominant, outer one
- use the ‘insider’ voice of their community – the ‘nation-language’ - to reverse the power imbalance by making this voice the dominant and heard one
- juxtapose the dominant voice and the personal voice, to show the dialogue between them
- layer the personal voice and the dominant voice so, within the narrative, the reader slides between one sensibility and the other

Three examples of autobiography have formed inspirations for my own strategies in the course of this dissertation. The first is Lorna Sage’s autobiography, *Bad Blood*, which won the Whitbread Prize shortly after the author’s death in 2000 (Sage 2000). The autobiography gives us the forward-motion of a narrative, and interweaves personal narrative about self and family with social commentary about values, customs, habits, attitudes, life style. We see the family members not only as themselves and part of a narrative direction, but also as representatives to some extent of their time, class, social status, region. Each have a set of characteristics which are both unique, but which also tell us about the world in which they lived. Dropped into her own narrative, is the diary of her grandfather, which we are allowed access to piece by piece, much as she herself might have read it to unravel his story. We hear his voice but also the simultaneous development of his story, parallel to her retrospective commentary on it. This is done subtly through an interweaving of ‘voices’. Lorna Sage herself is storyteller, child through whose eyes adults are seen, critic, social commentator, - shuttling seamlessly between all these roles. Here she describes with irony and humour the education of rural children in the 1950’s.

*The further up the school you went, the less you were formally taught or expected to learn. **There was knitting, sewing and weaving for older girls, who would sit out winter playtimes gossiping round the stove, their legs marbled with red parboiled veins from the heat. The big boys did woodwork and were also kept busy taking out the ashes, filling coke buckets and digging the garden.** None of the more substantial farmers sent their children to Hanmer school. It had been designed to produce domestic servants and farm labourers, and functional illiteracy was still part of the expectation, almost part of the curriculum.*

Text in italics: the social commentator

Text in bold: the narrator (Sage: 19)

At times, to illustrate more clearly the values of her environment, she embeds their voices too: the severe grandmother, the moralising nurses, the dismissive university lecturers. Without actually creating dialogue, we have a sense of the vocabulary and intonation of their messages. In the passage below, the family doctor has just examined her and established that she is pregnant.

I'd been caught out, I would have to pay. I was in trouble. I'd have no secrets any longer, I'd be exposed as a fraud, my fate wasn't my own, my treacherous body had somehow delivered me into other people's hands. *Dr. Clayton asked if he should tell my mother, but he wasn't really asking. --- My mother came upstairs and opened the door, her face red and puffed up with outrage, her eyes blazing with tears. She'll tell, this time, no question. For a minute she says nothing and then it comes out in a wail. What have you done to me? Over and over again. I've spoiled everything, now this house will be a shameful place like the vicarage. I've soiled and insulted her with my promiscuity, my sly, grubby lusts ---- I've done it now, I've made my mother pregnant.* (ibid: 236)

Bold letters: Dr. Clayton

Italics: Lorna's voice

Underlining: Mother's voice

This method sets up an inner dialogue of multiple voices embedded in one text: and allows the author at the same time to participate in the text and to comment on it. It is a model of the strategy Bakhtin described as 'heteroglossia':

an utterance that belongs, by its grammatical (syntactical) and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two 'languages', two semantic and axiological belief systems. (Bakhtin 1934: 304-305)

A second 'story-making' strategy is represented in Joachim Appel's *Diary of a Language Teacher* (Appel 1995). His diary is divided into chapters, each of which has two parts. The first part is an account of the 'action' in the classroom, simultaneous to its occurrence. The accounts have been selected from a daily record,

clustered together to form themes such as: classroom discipline, management, teacher decisions and resources: but apart from this thematic clustering and selection, there appears to be no other intervention into the text. Responses are recorded on the day they emerge, without attempts to connect, analyse or predict: and obviously, without the benefit of hindsight (as in Lorna Sage's case). Because of this, Appel allows us to see the raw reactivity of the teacher's life. We enter into the apparently random clutter of the teacher's day, and the 'kneejerk' responses we are forced into, pre-reflection. The second part of the chapter then reviews this first part, and identifies from the safety of distance, what emerges from the account. For example, the first chapter records the pure torment of his encounter with the 'nightmare' class 10A. It records the battles for power, his momentary breakdown, the demolition of his own ideals when confronted with reality. The second half 'unpacks' issues of discipline, alienation, expectation, staff solidarity (or lack of it), the transition from novice to 'expert', the generation gap and communication gulfs. He salvages from his own story, not only principles, causes and connections, but a strategy for self-development. This second method is the diametric opposite of the first, in that it involves the author in two phases of his own self-knowledge. The first is 'total immersion' in the experience: the second involves a lapse in time, a shifting in emotional distance, and an invitation to see the self as 'other'. The two phases are kept strictly separate, so the experience of each is sealed and self-contained.

A third autobiographical strategy is Jean-Paul Sartre's *The Words* (Sartre 1964). Here he has chosen to pare away all expectation of an external narrative. The autobiography is self-referential, in that it takes us not outward to Sartre's world (as Lorna Sage does), nor does it act as a record of daily life (as in Appel's diary): but it takes us inward, into the mechanism of an artist's psyche. The landscape we populate through this work is entirely that of the writer's mind. As such, it is a fascinating account of what it is to be marked from childhood as a 'genius':

The Holy Ghost and I held secret meetings: "You'll write," he said to me. I wrung my hands: "What is there about me, Lord, that has made you choose me?" – "Nothing in particular". – "Then, why me?" – "For no reason." – "Do I at least have an aptitude for writing?" – "Not at all. Do you think that the great works are born of flowing pens?" – "Lord, since I'm such a nonentity, how could I write a book?" – "By buckling down to it." "Does that mean anyone can write?" "Anyone. But you're the one I've chosen." (Sartre 1964: 116)

I was born of writing. Before that there was only a play of mirrors. With my first novel, I knew that a child had got into the hall of mirrors. By writing I was existing. I was escaping from the grown-ups but I existed only in order to write, and if I said “I” that meant “I who write”. In any case, I knew joy. The public child was making private appointments with himself (ibid: 95)

The autobiography stays in the same place, in the same time frame, and as readers we are utterly content to remain there. Sartre does not grow up, does not get older, does not change home or school throughout the autobiography: and we do not care, because he has placed us as reader where he himself is:

It was in books that I encountered the universe: assimilated, classified, labelled, pondered, still formidable: and I confused the disorder of my bookish experiences with the random course of real events. (ibid: 32)

In varying ways, I have drawn on the strategies modelled by these three authors in the dissertation that follows. Where my account involves retrospection- as in accounts of childhood - and where its key interest lies in the unravelling of the social environment around me, I have attempted multiple authorial roles as does Lorna Sage. This is true of Chapter 3, which describes childhood experience from the perspective of the adult I am now, the child I was then, and the adults who shared and influenced my environment. As an author I am able to shuttle between personae in the way that Lorna Sage does; and to use document as a way of unravelling an earlier story. Chapters 4 - 6 describe ‘inner voyages’ in the world of a writer, and in many ways, I have found Sartre to be an inspirational model of my intentions here. The movement from and to that I describe is not in place or time predominantly, but in the evolution of ideas from conception to realisation.

In contrast, Chapter Ten - the chapter about critical incidents in the academy- draws directly from simultaneous diaries and poems during this event (including a more recent novel extract). I have allowed the reader to ‘totally immerse’ in the nightmare, as we do with Appel’s dreaded 10A. The second half of this chapter draws together themes, observations, and theoretical frameworks which helped in retrospect to illuminate the experience: and to extract from it insights and tools for self-development. In doing this, I have made clear the time lapse and emotional distance

between the first part and the second: and the necessity for this, before learning could take place.

2.4 Reading as a writer: the universal story

Reading as a writer means that text has been, for me, alive and interactive, an infinite resource from which a large number of understandings have been mined:

- I have found in story the universality of the human condition: emotions such as homesickness, alienation, loneliness, love, loss and ambition (Feinstein and Krippner 1989, Angwin 1994)
- I have found in story the poles used in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy: the high points, the low points, the points of revelation and discovery, the critical moments such as separation (divorce, moving home, death) and loss of self-esteem (bankruptcy, redundancy). (Rogers 1990, Gersie and King 1990, Anderson and MacCurdy 2000, Hunt 2000)
- I have been able to identify in story the theatrical unities described by Aristotle: the fatal flaw, the moment of recognition or ‘anagnorsis’, the moment of reversal or ‘peripataie’, the moment of culmination and purgation, ‘catharsis’ (Aristotle 1965)
- I have found in story a variety of universal structures: character types such as victim, benefactor or donor, false friend, villain, heroine: plot types, such as conflict, quest, separation, reunion; story structures such as orientation, complication, resolution (Propp 1928, Tobias 1995, Toolan 2006).

Most interesting has been the understanding that all these levels operate at the same time within a story, and that these levels speak to and echo one another. For example, the ancient Greek idea of ‘harmatia’ – the fatal flaw - has remarkable parallels with Jung’s idea of the ‘shadow’, the ‘dark side’ of the self housed in the unconscious (Jung 1971). The idea of ‘anagnorsis’ or moment of recognition, parallels the therapeutic belief that primal memory will ‘unlock’ the unconscious. The film *Spellbound* (Hitchcock 1944), for example, tells the story of a character who is subject to wild mood swings, and cannot be liberated from this until he remembers a critical moment in his childhood. The story structures of orientation, complication and resolution parallel our current understanding of group dynamics

and the stages of ‘norming’, ‘storming’ and ‘reforming’ (Heron 2000, Johnson and Johnson 1991); the ‘reality’ shows which are such popular viewing in the 21st century, are in fact offering the viewing public a narrative of group formation.

Awareness of these overlaps has informed my understanding of story, both as writer and as educator. In 1994 I wrote an article which explored the parallels between story and ‘life’, using the interpretations suggested above. In that article, I firstly showed how an appreciation of character types can offer an educational and linguistic resource for the teacher and writer:

- they form part of our expectations about story. Thus they shape the way we construct and interpret story. Propp’s classification helps us to make these expectations conscious.
- they represent ‘types’ in our own personal worlds and cultures. Thus, they help us to classify and reflect on our own experience of other human beings
- the categories themselves are non-culture specific, but the way they are realised and interpreted is culture-specific. The classification, therefore, can form a rich resource for comparison and contrast between cultures and contexts.
- they can form the building blocks for creating story, as well as interpreting and appreciating story
- the way we interpret and respond to each character can highlight our values, beliefs, memories and dreams. (Spiro 1994: 163. See Appendix Reading 17).

I then show the overlaps between the critical life moments suggested above and made prominent in therapeutic literature: and plot archetypes that recur in folktale and myth.

Key moments	Propp’s archetypal plot types
Major separations	Family member leaves home
Failures	A rule/prohibition is broken
Moments of hurt/fear	Villain harms a family member
Major decisions	Hero plans action against the villain
Major conflicts/struggles	Hero and villain join in combat
Major victories/triumphs	Villain is defeated

Major reunions	Hero returns home
Major defeats/disappointments	False hero usurps the hero's place
Moments of joy	The hero is married and crowned

Table 1: Spheres of action in life and story Spiro 1994: 166

The article ends with a message to the teacher:

The discussion in this paper has mapped out a territory that makes story a universal, equally applicable to 'reality' as to 'fiction'. The classifications discussed equally offer ways of describing our own lives, as describing the lives of 'story' characters. As such, we have at our fingertips a rich resource, not only for appreciation of what we read, but also for understanding and describing the way we live. (Spiro 1994: 167).

See Appendix Reading 18 for the full text of this article.

How I take up this opportunity in my own practice is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7. I also illustrate it in the next section, through stories that shaped my world view as a child.

2.5 Your story is mine: the yellowbrick road

In Section 2.1 I posited the view that it is possible to learn both through story, as well as from it: the story itself effects a process of change, - in empathy, understanding, belief. As a child, reading was one of my most dynamic learning environments. I fully embraced the story of others as an expansion of my own, as the reading world and my own became permeable. The section that follows analyses specific examples of this interweaving of story worlds – fictional/actual.

These scenes and characters in particular haunted me:

- Paddington Bear, a foreigner from Peru, left at Paddington Station with a label round his neck (Michael Bond).
- Just William with his socks always round his ankles, collecting money for the war effort (Richmal Crompton)
- Heidi, wearing her whole wardrobe of clothes on her back and walking across the mountains to her new home (Joanna Spyri)

- Chalet School stories, about a school in the Swiss Alps with multilingual children, who spoke a different language each day of the week (Elinor Brent-Dyer).
- The Narnia stories, the moment of walking through a wardrobe into another parallel universe (C.S. Lewis)
- *Five Children and It*, about five children who are befriended by a strange extra-terrestrial magic creature hidden to adults (E. Nesbit).
- *Redcap Runs Away*, a medieval child with soft shoes and a tall red cap, running through the streets of London (Rhoda Power).

The stories, and these scenes in particular, were clear precursors of what life may – or could- hold, and its complexity of darkness and light. I remember sobbing all night when Heidi's grandfather died: a precursor to the death of my own grandfather. I remember discovering the existence of the Holocaust through a children's story called *I am David* (Ann Holm) and shaking all night with terror. I remember being haunted by the death of Helen Burns in *Jane Eyre* and also, through *Jane Eyre*, understanding that the cosy circles of clean marriages in which my parents mixed, was only one story amongst many.

What was clear, was that story was extending my sense of humanity. It was my research into the act of living, and it connected me with that act. Through story, I joined a far larger family than the one I was born into. Through story, too, I had teachers whose messages were, or became, exactly what I wanted to learn. Amongst these stories, my earliest favourite was *The Wizard of Oz*; the colour picture book was one of the beloved objects of childhood, revisited many times through the text, the pictures, and the film.

The Wizard of Oz Frank Baum

Dorothy, the tin man and the lion were amongst my early childhood role models.

Dorothy: Dorothy, like so many story heroines, experienced the trauma of separation before her story could start. Very like growing up itself, the cyclone is both dramatic and traumatic, the forces of nature roaring in like a storm and taking over. Dorothy has no choice, and no capacity to resist. But once the storm has done its work, and carried her far from home, the changed and new world is intoxicating, and she hardly

gives the old one another thought. Her capacity for learning accelerates, her sense of time slows down, her capacity for observation is highlighted. The world appears in a series of glorious colours; the Emerald kingdom, the Munchkins and the yellow brick road are all experienced as sequences of rainbow colours. Most important, are the new friends she meets on the way: the lion, the tin man without a heart. Each shed new light on what is possible in the human (animal-as-human) psyche.

The lion: The lion is working hard to be a stereotype lion. He is practising lion-behaviour, but this does not help: first he recognises that behaving stereotypically makes people react to him too in a stereotypical way. They back away, they are afraid, they perceive him as hostile and aggressive. His second realisation, is that the behaviour does not match his true feelings. No amount of roaring gives him courage: and in fact, the more the roaring, the wider the gulf between what he is and what he seems to be.

The tin man: The tin man perceives that others in the world have something he does not have – a heart. Although these others might take for granted this precious possession, or even abuse it, still he sees them as better off than he is. The tin man, most of all, wants to be the same as others. Because he lacks what others have, he does not value or notice any of the qualities he does already have: loyalty, kindness, compassion.

The wizard: The mystery and excitement of the wizard lies in his absence, and in his public media-controlled image. Whilst all the other mysteries of the kingdom of Oz are to be seen, the wizard himself is not to be seen. The complicated journey to reach him, his unavailability, his preoccupation with more important things, increases his desirability. Combined with this, is the publicity machinery that protects and promotes him. It pumps the reader with anticipation and hype. Yet, in my picture book, when Dorothy actually meets the wizard, he is tiny and balding, with much less charisma than the friends she has already found. He is the embodiment of delusion and self-delusion.

Coming home: When Dorothy comes home, it has translated itself from a comforting childhood zone, to somewhere that has become too small and too dull. There is a real danger that the experiences she has had will become invisible here, at least to all those around her. They will become transformed into a secret knowledge, which will separate her from others. The friends she made, for example, challenge everything that is normal in this world. The only way to keep the secret alive, is to use it as a

new framework for interpreting the ordinary world. The lion can help her to see what is behind people's behaviour: and will stop her judging people from appearance only. The tin man can help her to evaluate people by who they are, and not what they own. The wizard can help her to cut through the images people create of themselves, and find the actual person behind.

Thus, through this compassionate encounter with others' stories, core values of right and wrong, empowerment and disempowerment, were formulated. Similarly, narrative principles became translated into life understanding: how events connect through cause and effect, the links between memory and present, between the fictional/metaphorical and the actual. These formed the grounding for my own appetite to read and write story, and to interpret life as lived story with complex layers of metaphorical and coded meaning.

This chapter has explored how my own reader:writer/educator roles have been shaped by reading, reflecting and connecting with others within a broad 'literature'. It has attempted to do the following:

- Explore the ways in which core beliefs are both formulated through reading and expressed in reading choices and interpretation
- Explore the ways in which story connects with both personal and universal experience
- Explore the ways in which empathy with a text can lead to understanding of writer strategy, linguistic and story components
- Explore the ways in which this detailed analysis can be 'transformed' into actual practice both by the writer and by the educator, thereby allowing reader, writer and 'appreciator' to expand their capacity for finding a voice, and to transform the reading experience into deep learning and new knowledge.

This chapter also lays the foundation for my own study in the following specific ways:

- It explains why, how, and in what ways, the 'I' persona is being used in this thesis; and with what literary and researcher precedents
- It explains my rationale for using 'story' as a framework

- It illustrates the nature of my relationship with ‘literature’ in the field, as a foundation and grounding for my own voice

In so doing, it also uncovers answers to some of the core questions of this dissertation:

How is ‘transformation’ demonstrated in this chapter? by revealing the ways in which apparently disparate areas of knowledge and understanding, can inform and ‘speak’ to one another, to create a new and third ‘understanding’ that comprises but is more than its parts; specifically – ways in which I might write my own ‘autobiography’, ways in which I might interpret and connect story with research, psychological understanding and literary understanding; and ways in which I might make sense of that connection for learners. This is the act of collation and integration of any researcher: but also suggests the potential value for the researcher, in achieving eclecticism as a route towards focus. The chapter also aims to illustrate the many ways of learning from the stories of others and the permeability between understanding self: understanding other.

The next chapter, ***Weaving Stories*** will demonstrate through practice the ways in which reading history forms a ground for creativity and is transformed through it.

Chapter Three

Weaving stories: from lived to created story

Connection

Whilst being fully present in the moment and able to respond to the detail of what forms the moment, part of this mindfulness is understanding the many threads that lead from past to present and shape where we are now. It is possible to honour our personal and collective history whilst living fully in the present.

This chapter continues to explore the core value **connection** discussed in the previous chapter. Chapter Two considered the connection between a personal reading history and ‘living theory’, the growth of understanding and practice as a reader/writer and researcher. The chapter that follows explores the evolution of ‘living theory’ in its earliest incubation in childhood stories, memories and writings. It shall do so by interweaving three layers of story: the theorised position of the researcher and adult seeking to contextualise the specific and frame the passionate within the dispassionate: the autobiographical adult, whose retrospective on childhood is filtered through the ‘glass’ of memory, and thus both mirrors and distorts; and the passionately engaged child, writing for self and her invisible future audience, uncluttered by self-consciousness. These writings include:

- *My First Reading Book*: stories written aged 6 and 8
- *Making bamboo pipes*: my first venture into pedagogy, aged 9
- *Niassur*: my invented language, aged 10, written as a pedagogic grammar
- *The Musical Box*: songs and tunes for beginners, aged 11
- Poetry diary and notebooks aged 12 and 13
- *Gingerhoof Island*: full-length children’s story completed, aged 12

In exploring these childhood writings, all produced between the ages of 6 and 12, I am also looking at why, and with what implications, I use the term *creative*. I also consider the process of how the child writer : adult researcher *transforms knowledge* in order to move from lived story to created story: how did this transformation come about and what knowledges and skills were deployed as a child, in order to do this?

3.1 Creative landscapes

In claiming to have been a ‘creative’ child, and subsequently adult, what do I mean? What debates am I entering, in using this complex, misunderstood and ambiguous word? We have only applied the term *creative* to the artist since the 20th century

(Oxford English Dictionary 1989), and even then, artists themselves rarely describe themselves as such: writers do not call themselves *creative* writers, and indeed I have only done so in this dissertation in order to differentiate two dis-integrated kinds of writing and being. Is this a term that has been generated by those who are not to describe those who are, for the purposes of assessment, funding and marketing? My position here is that I have needed to give a name to a phenomenon that I experience as a specific and powerful energy; and that this energy pre-existed the formulation of labels to describe it. It is both as a label and as a phenomenon that I discuss creativity in this section.

The word family (creative/creativity) derives from the Latin verb *creo* – to make, or do, and its range of synonyms: to generate, to give birth, to produce, to manufacture, to change, to invent, to transform. *To make* is the capacity of the life principle - to make artefacts which are both life's quest for survival and beautiful, as are hand-thrown pots, woven carpets, spiders' webs and birds' nests. Thus creativity in this sense does not privilege the activity to the specially gifted or the unique; on the contrary, it is the essential skill of the survivor. Other synonyms are ethically ambiguous; *to invent* semantically carries the idea of *to lie*, as in *creative accounting*, and indeed, the capacity of the storyteller to fictionalise the truth. *To give birth* suggests the notion of creation from first beginnings; whilst *to transform/change* assumes raw material, a pre-existing starting point (Pope 2005). Embedded inside this term are the core debates and dilemmas which attach to creativity as a phenomenon:

- Do creative ideas derive from the stimulus of the outside world, or do they spring from nowhere, *ex nihilo*, the unbidden voice of a muse? Sartre (1964) and Cocteau (1952) claim god-like inspiration which “comes from beyond and is offered us by the gods” (Cocteau 1952: 82), yet the creatively gifted are articulate too about the influences that shape them – cultural, social, psychological (Allott 1959, Conrad 1920, Ghiselin 1952, Allison and Gediman 2007). By unravelling the sources, influences and shaping forces, do we minimise creative uniqueness, or illuminate it?
- Is creativity part of the “natural and normal state of anyone healthy in a sane and stimulating community” (Pope 2005: xvi) or is the creative person

specially, mystically gifted? Do we still believe in genius, and if so what are the implications for those of us who are not? (Weisberg 1993, Miller 2000 and Nettle 2001).

- Does creativity *do* something, or is it merely decorative and luxurious? What is the artist's responsibility to the outside world, and what is the point of his/her work? Most artists have a powerful sense of the worth of their work: the composer Leonard Bernstein, in interview, said "I believe that man's noblest endowment is his capacity to change. --- we must know ourselves better through art" (Bernstein 2007: 21). To share this with the world is an artistic imperative: "what is the point of having experience, knowledge or talent if I don't give it away? Of having stories if I don't tell them to others?" (Allende 2007: 15). Yet how far does the non-artist share this view, and with what dangers and implications?
- Can we call all examples of human enterprise *creative*, or only selected and privileged examples? Some have tried to define what does or does not constitute artistic taste and how cultures ascribe values to creative outcomes (Bourdieu 1984, Negus and Pickering 2004, Carter 2006). An ethnographic approach, alternatively, values all human productivity as windows into the human condition and the culture/context in which it finds itself (Morrison 2007, Clifford and Marcus 2004).
- Can creativity be developed and trained, or does it spring fully formed for those privileged to do so? In other words, is it teachable, and to whom? In placing creativity within the curriculum, educators have made a commitment to its developmental capacity (Buckingham 2003, Balshaw 2004, CAPE 2004, Creative Partnerships 2007). Yet embedded in the myth of creativity, is the idea that it is effortless for the talented, and unattainable for others.
- What is the balance between the chaos/free association/unconscious phases of the creative process and the discipline of the craftsperson honing, shaping and ordering? Metaphors of this process include the potter throwing down the clay and then shaping it (Elbow 1973); "writing down the bones" and then fleshing them out (Goldberg 1986), playing, learning the rules and then playing *with* the rules (Boden 2001). What is the evolution and interplay between these

two processes – or indeed, are they in fact one inextricably intertwined process ? (Pope 2005: xvi, Coveney and Highfield 1995, Hayles 1991)

In exploring the story of a creative childhood, I explore the capacity to *transform* the raw material of my life and experiences into fictional, metaphorical shape, to *make* ‘something new’ – whether this be a bamboo pipe from a strip of wood, or a new language with invented words. The story also explores my struggles with the issues suggested above – the purpose and value of art, whether art should be effortless, child writer as special or ordinary, and the artist’s place in the world.

3.2 Interweaving the remembered, the lived and the created: the methodology of memory

The account of childhood that follows illustrates the immediacy and reality of the issues discussed above. As with all memory, this childhood story is subject to the slipperiness of invention: “each truth about ourselves is a construction of the moment, true only for a given time and within certain relationships” (Gergen 1991 cited in Sampson: 2006: 15). This is especially the case here, since the memories have been written within several time frames: child and adult, reflecting on the same experiences; adult as storyteller/adult as researcher moving into and out of the stories at different times in my dissertation-writing process.

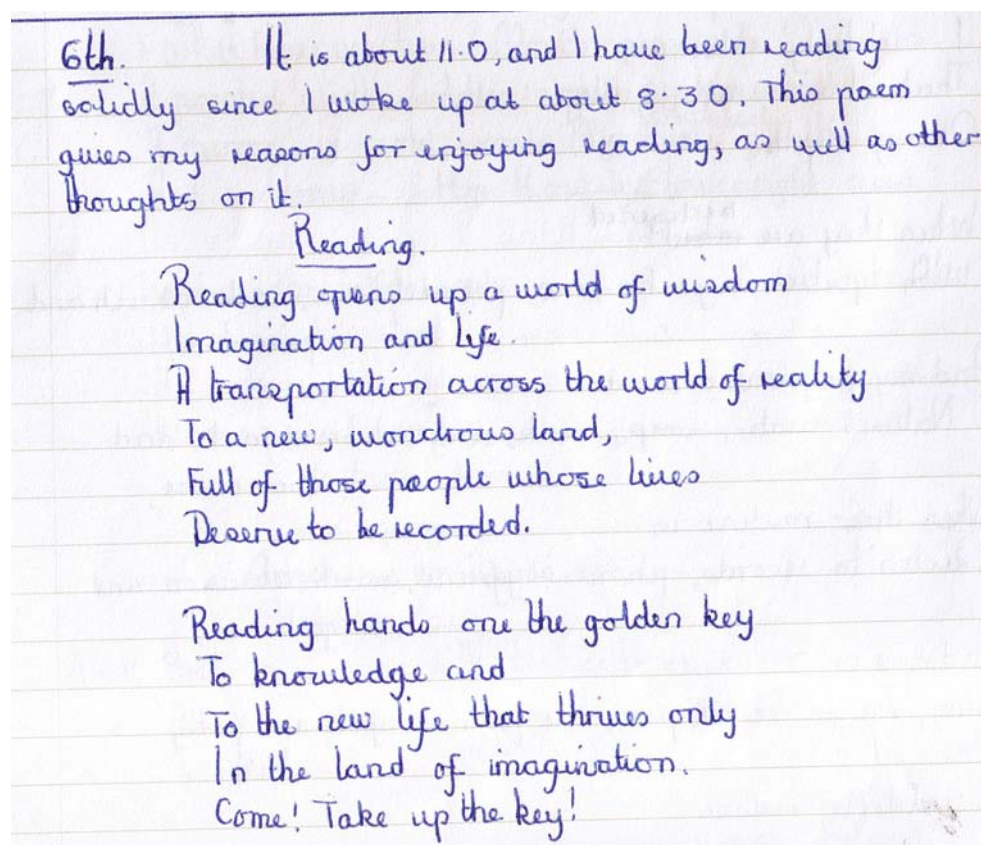
* * * *

Even as a small child, there was a voice that said clearly: *Write*. Nothing in my immediate environment encouraged such a voice. My father's family had arrived in England from Warsaw weeks before the war, saved through the foresight of a great-uncle who had transported his fancy button factory to Newcastle. Realising there was no market for fancy buttons in a post-recession pre-war Northumberland, they changed to paper, and throughout the war years were a roaring success producing the definitive war toilet paper (called ORIPS – backwards for SPIRO). Business and survival were inextricably linked: and paper was for selling, not for writing on. My mother's family had been in Britain one generation longer than the Spiros, having escaped the Russian revolution and pogroms in the villages at the start of the 20th century. This was a daughter-dominated family, and the destinies prescribed were classically limited female ones, in which personal aspirations were

regarded as self-indulgent and unnatural. A woman was primed from childhood to mimic the enclosure of the family home: sealed from the outside culture in a cocoon of ancient values. It was for the men to rise in the outside world: the women to preserve and sustain the inside one.

The family were pragmatists, and for them writers had no proper niche in any society. They were always at an angle from it, their success was to subvert. The private culture was, surely, too sacred to unravel or make public; and the outside one - how could you subvert something you did not belong to, something that took all your energies to enter in the first place? After all, this society I grew in was still being painstakingly interpreted by the first generation. Their observations were the partial views of outsiders: the people drank a lot, had their Sabbath on a Sunday, celebrated Christmas with irresistible shows of food and gifts, and may always be, under their politeness, anti-semitic. These were the half-truths established by the emigre generation, along with a number of others. It was the best society to escape to in the 1930's. English winters were better than Polish winters. In Poland, not one of them would have got to university, not one would have been professional. What more could you ask of a society? And what could a child of the second generation offer it, or say, that was worth saying? To try to do so, was entirely and dangerously counter-culture.

It was not that writing was a dream. The written word, for me, was a parallel universe. With a pencil, or eventually a pen in my hand, a window seemed to open like the wardrobe into Narnia. What I wrote as a child was a celebration of what I knew, what I heard, and what I read.



Poetry diary: Sep. 12th 1967 aged 12

* * * * *

At six years old I began, and filled to the brim, my first 'book' – a red notebook bulging with stories and pictures, at first in pencil with writing not yet joined up, but as the book – and the years – progress, moving into a bold joined up ballpoint ink. The book is set out like a 'real' book, with a title page My First Reading Book, and a contents page on which I have written

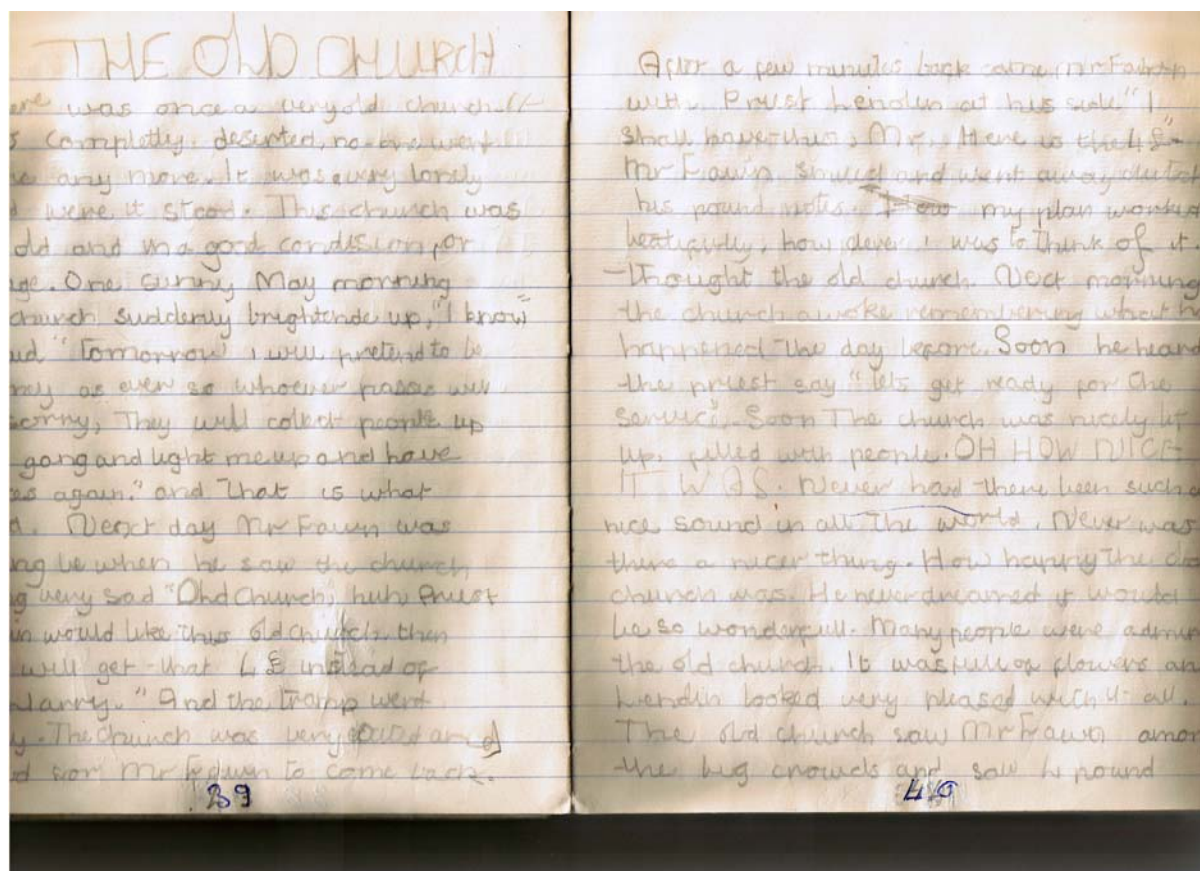
This is the first book where we could do a picture story

The stories are about birthday parties, farms and animals, bus trips to the moon, buying new shoes and hats, school days, ballet lessons, but the presence of a spiritual curiosity and independence is already apparent. *The Old Church* tells the story of a church that has been abandoned by its congregation.

There was once a very old church. It was completely deserted, no-one went there any more. It was a very lonely road where it stood. This church was very old and in a good condition for his age. One sunny May morning the church suddenly brightened up, "I know" he said "tomorrow I will pretend to be as lonely as ever so whoever passes will feel sorry, They will collect people up in a gang and light me up and have services again." And that is what he did.

The plan succeeds, and the story concludes:

The church smiled and stood breathless with happiness. He felt so young, now the things which used to happen years ago had arrived again.

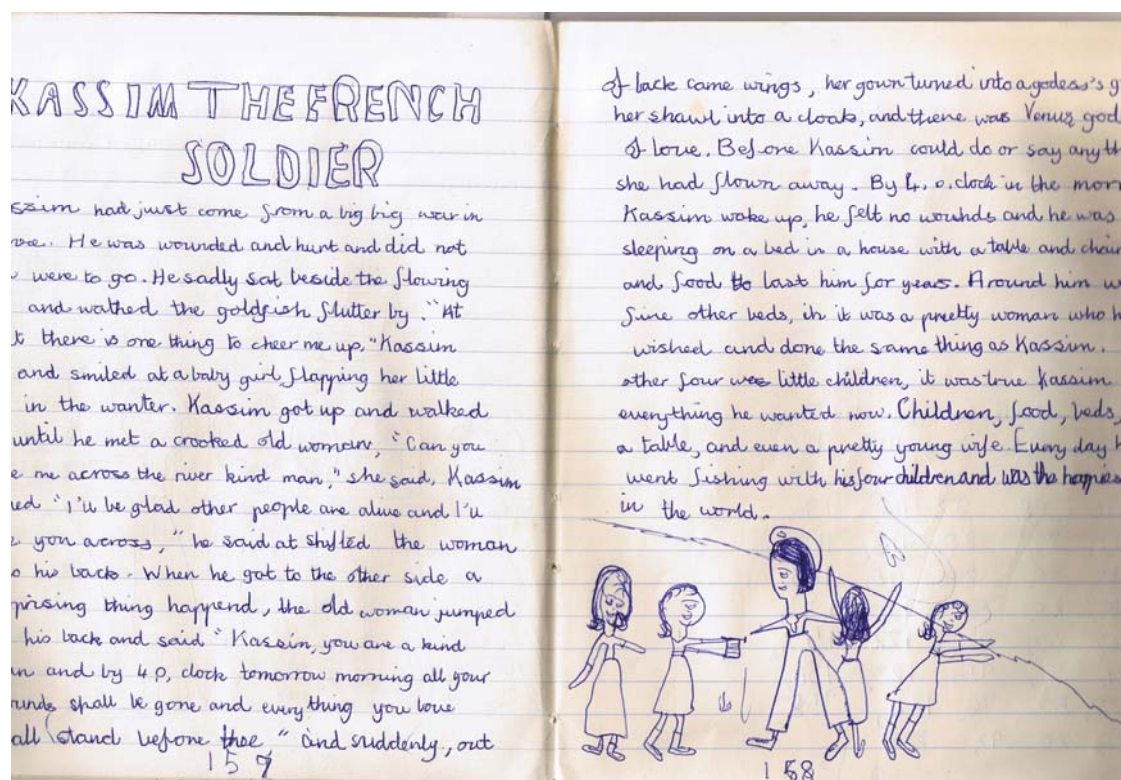


Pencil manuscript: The Old Church aged 6

My parents would have been astonished to note that the questions about the spirit I was subliminally asking, appeared to be answered from an eclectic mix of Christianity (churches seemed here far more mythical to me than the synagogues I knew and visited), Greek myths (stories I enjoyed), or indeed any spiritual nourishment I could find, including the sun itself (see prayer to the sun facsimile 6). In another story *Kassim the French Soldier*, Kassim is magically healed from his war wounds because he carries an old lady across the river, saying to her “I’ll be glad other people are alive and I’ll take you across.” In thanks for his kindness, she turns into a winged Venus, goddess of love, dressed very similarly to pre-Raphaelite images of archangels:

suddenly, out of back came wings, her gown turned into a goddess’s gown, her shawl into a cloak, and there was Venus, goddess of love.

Kassim the French Soldier: aged 7.



She grants him everything he wants, “children, food, beds, chairs, a table, and even a pretty young wife. Every day he went fishing with his four children and was the happiest man in the world.”

Somewhere in Kassim’s story, the child of refugee parents has absorbed, and made acceptable the notion of war. Kassim has taken away from his experience an appreciation of the preciousness of life, and the possibility of starting again. The new family Kassim creates echoes my own ‘real life’ family with all its vigorous ‘starting again’, from the abandoned ghetto in Warsaw to the suburbs of north London bristling with Jewish social life.

* * * * *

Synagogue visits, Friday night services, festivals through the year, must have haunted me: the prominence of the spiritual in everyday life, the language of worship - repetitions, incantations, the words half-sung, uttered in trance-like states, men rocking with closed eyes. Language was never tiresomely linked with understanding for me: there was too much Polish and Hebrew in the air for that to be the case. Neither were intended to be understood: they were a music, a set of rhythms, they

created groups, and excluded others: they were chants, rituals. Language was a set of magic spells.

* * * * *

At 10 I invented my own language called Niassur: Russian misspelt backwards, which was the most exotic language I could think of (although it was my maternal grandmother's mother tongue). Niassur had a grammar book, explaining the position of definite articles and how to make words plural: and a vocabulary book with labelled drawings of the interior of houses and family trees. This grammar book reflects my own recent encounters with Latin, and Hebrew lessons with a family friend in which I was introduced to bewildering linguistic labels such as 'masculine' and 'feminine'. Though I had no idea what these words meant, I could see – and was fascinated by the fact – that they described different patterns and shapes of words, words with different endings and different kinds of behaviour. I wanted to 'play' with patterns in just the same way. My family tree illustrates "just what – the rules enable one to do—They can be stretched, tweaked or even significantly changed. Dogged exploration shades into playing around, and playing around can sometimes result in fundamental transformation of the space concerned." (Boden 2001: 96 – 97).

Lin sillon: grandpa lin sillonnesse: grandma

lin caron cousin lin caronesse cousin

2. Articles Common nouns; SINGULAR PLURAL

	SINGULAR	PLURAL	Definite	Indefinite
Min	Min	Mint	the knife	a knife
El	El	—	the knife	a knife
e.g.	min avel	mint aveln	the knife	a knife
	el meron	meronl	a belt	a belt

Only used for THINGS.

3. All living things are proper nouns except plants and flowers.
i.e. All mammals and birds.

• Their articles differ from those of common nouns.

	SINGULAR	PLURAL	Definite	Indefinite
lin	lin	lint	the uncle	a uncle
mel	—	—	the bear	a bear
e.g.	lin onne	lint onneb	the uncle	a uncle
	mel a burn	burnel	a bear	a bear

4. Feminine mammals add SSE or ESSE to their neuter form in the singular, and SEK or ESEK in the plural.

e.g.

lin onnesse	lint onnesel	aunt
mel burnesse	burnesel	female bear

THE FAMILY - lin fun

lin sillon-grampa

lin silloness-grandma

li-father

lin elass-mother

lin onnesse-aunt

lin titisse

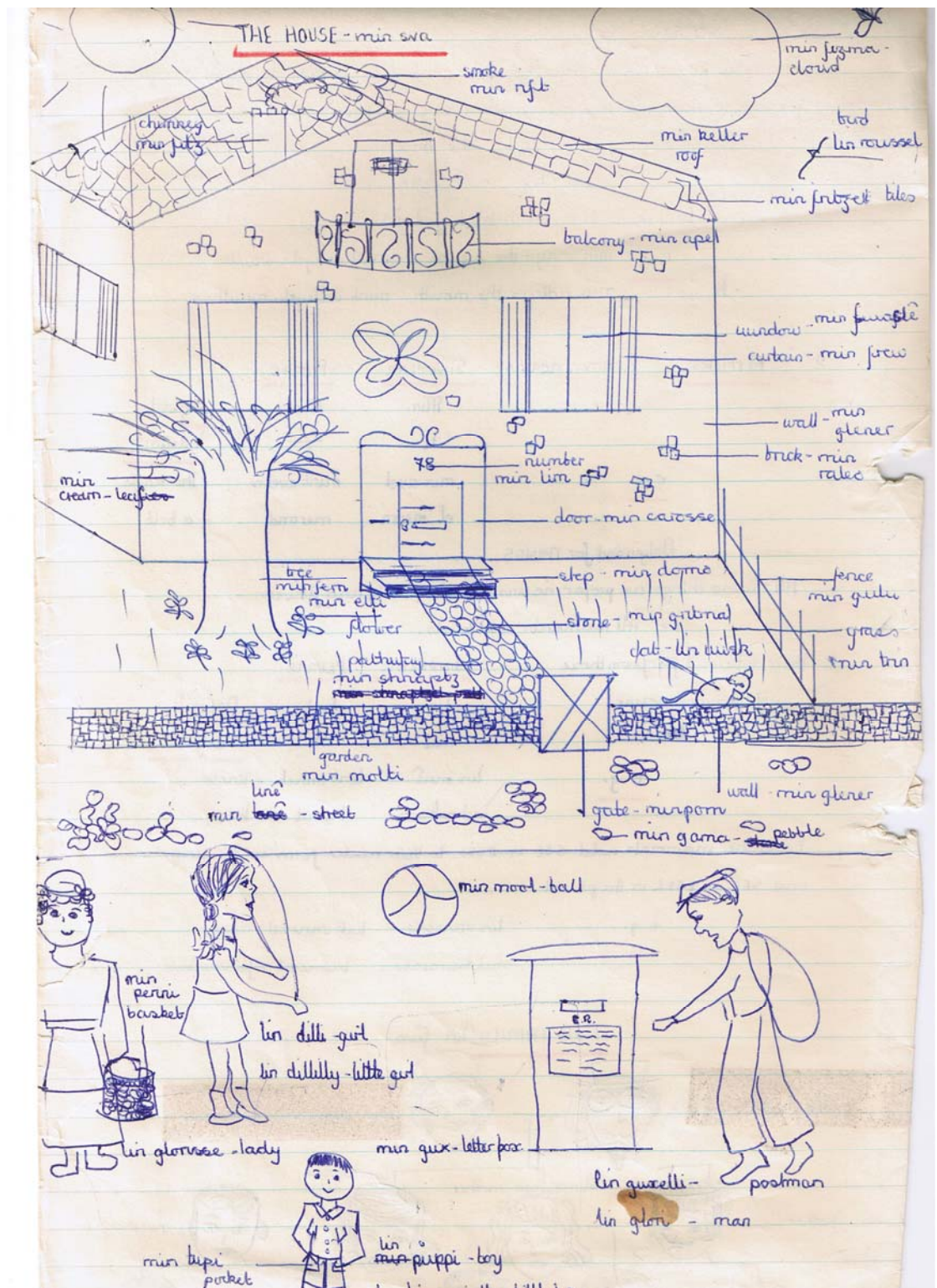
lin gu

lin caroness

lin caron

li-brother

li-sister



Niassur: invented language aged 9: house and family vocabulary

The experience of other languages had helped me understand that specific sounds are not inextricably connected with specific meanings, but that every language makes new connections. So I had freedom to match ‘things’ and ‘people’ to the sounds/music they conveyed to me. *Min melodi* is a poem; *lin rubab* is a sheep; *lin april* is a lamb; *lin zuzza* is a bee; *lin chatterjee* is a word (actually the surname of a schoolfriend of mine). The different articles are not accidental: ‘things’ are differentiated from the ‘living’ as a central distinction in my new language. “Things” take the article *min*, “all living things” take the article *lin*.

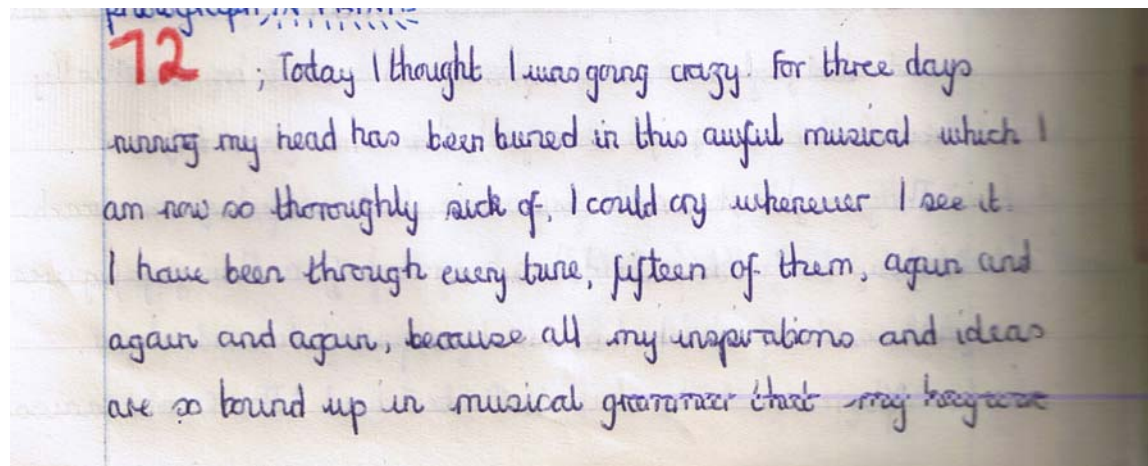
This joyful language never quite became the secret code I had intended: but I was safe in that few people wished to break into my secret world anyway, and even had they, I had the safety of being able to write in mirror-writing (as do a small percentage of all left-handed people). Although there was a high degree of control in the rules and strategies, and these derivative from Latin, French and Hebrew, it is also clear that I am projecting into this language my own values and sensibilities, and achieving a sense of flight and experimentation which transform the disciplines which informed them.

* * * * *

My first ‘book’ spanned the years 8 and 9. A clear inspiration for this, was E.Nesbit’s *‘Five Children and It’*: the everyday world, with a magical friend dropped into it. It was about a ‘secret five’ of girls, who adopt a magical pet and see into the future. One of the girls grows up to become an opera singer; another grows up to be a professor and novelist. Another predicts that when she grows up “I would go to the library and get byographys once a fortnight”. The stories are written in nine notebooks, with ballerinas on the front cover.

Did I share these stories with anyone? I have some recollection of reading them to my mother, who was my sole ally in an often harshly functional world. Yet I was alone in the artistic endeavour, and its pains and fulfilments were places I inhabited in isolation from parents or peers. My diaries record these struggles, which at 12 were already overridingly real. The extract below describes my experience of writing a musical to be performed at my local youth club.

Diary September 12th 1968: age 13



72 ; Today I thought I was going crazy. For three days running my head has been buried in this awful musical which I am now so thoroughly sick of. I could cry whenever I see it. I have been through every tune, fifteen of them, again and again and again, because all my inspirations and ideas are so bound up in musical grammar that my language

396.

ideas never seem to fall into the starched polished piece that music requires of it. And then I must copy ~~out~~ ^{it} all out neatly for the 'real thing', and I make a mistake. Rip! Out comes the page and another hour of careful re-copying. And mummy makes it worse. She knows absolutely nothing about music but whenever I play a chord, she cries 'That's wrong? That's wrong!' as if she was the world's greatest musical connoisseur. I could scream and pull my hair out as I try to pull and push and shape my musical into rigorous musical laws. And then I feel time pressing me on, and fits of ambition that end in bitter depression because they are dreams. But no! no they are not dreams. I can make them true! And I return with renewed vigour, but a boulder stops me a yard down the road. 'It's wrong! It's wrong!' 'Alright, I know it's wrong! Leave me alone!' And then mummy is hurt and angry and there is strife and strain between us for the rest of the day. I don't think it will ever be finished. I despise it and I love it, and I dream of ambitions that are not too far away I can reach for them but again and again ^{they are} ~~far~~ out of reach. And Tuesday will put a stop to the holidays and then will come the grit and grime of winter and school. With all those salty superior girls who never stop hating me, Latin verbs and hockey in the freezing cold. But most of all, the girls

These were secret diaries, destined for a future audience. I was their creator, their ideal reader, their appreciative audience. They were time capsules, awaiting the right moment to emerge. But not all my writing was secret. At some stage in primary

school, I created a class magazine which came out weekly with comic strip stories, made-up letters from readers, cartoons, and an editorial. My parents helped me to buy a tiny banda machine where I rolled off the magazine at home in highly fumed purple ink, sold the magazine in class for sixpence a copy, and sent the proceeds to Dr. Barnados. In the same golden years, I wrote a play about an exploitative landlord, which I directed and acted with schoolfriends, performing to the class in school. It was a cornucopia of unselfconscious productivity, and school and family made space for this, even while not sharing or always understanding it.

So what was the source of this delight in language, this productivity? My surroundings were entirely suburban, without apparent tension, drama, conflict or even, cultural energy. There were few books in our house, as my parents had a dislike of clutter. Though my mother was a voracious reader as a teenager, motherhood had routed it out, and she now expressed little inclination to read. She protected us fiercely from the outside world, vetting our friends, clothes, language, hobbies, how much good about ourselves we were allowed to hear, how much bad about the world we were allowed to hear, what was written in our diaries and the way we prayed. This made me unusually cocooned, and the world of solid objects unusually remote.

My father, in contrast, was the opposite of indulgent. For him, I was a litany of disasters. I fell into ditches, cut myself instead of paper, threw myself off bicycles, was made spectacularly sick by car journeys and boats, and sat in chairs reading instead of helping in the kitchen. For all these, I was publicly vilified, my disasters recounted by him with relish the way most parents show off their children's successes. Most of all, he despised my aspirations: to be a writer, a playwright, to write books as big as the complete Shaw and the complete Shakespeare, which were amongst the few we had in the house. My aspirations were the things my parents were most exercised by: my mother to protect me from being disappointed by them, my father from being defeminised by them.

The following notions of success filtered down to me: getting in to Oxford or Cambridge, marrying someone who went to Oxford or Cambridge, marrying someone who went to conferences all round the world and took you with, being clever enough to find someone like this, being clever enough to get a job which allowed you time to

have and bring up babies. Where did my parents acquire these notions of success? Being survivors, both parents had sensitive antennae as to where the dominant culture placed its values, and which were achievable: and Oxbridge was not a difficult one to identify. That these goals were new untried ones in the family, made them all the more attractive. Yet the key outcomes of this success were, awkwardly, predominantly male: public and respected social positions, with academic credibility, involving long hours and international travel. This was the success of the person whose arena was the outside world: and yet the woman's destiny was most certainly not this, but the interior world. She was the one who built the home, and made it an environment that supported a successful husband and nurtured children. So an ingenious solution to the dilemma, was to find a husband through whom one could vicariously live the 'outside' culture: while continuing to nurse and nurture the interior one.

This had been my mother's solution. She had given up a degree in Horticulture at Newcastle University to marry and have children. Her choice of study had been a dedicated and vocational one: she wished to live in Israel and help to set up a kibbutz. She had talked her way into Newcastle University at a time when ex-servicemen were given first priority, worked on a farm in Thaxted, and analysed thousands of carefully pinned and dissected insects which contributed to the ecology of a working farm. Her role as housewife, in contrast, had been accidental and enforced. The story goes that she mistook the date of her final exams and as a result failed the whole degree. To compound this, once engaged to my father he refused to consider a move to Israel, and gradually disposed of all her study records and insect classifications. Having briefly struck out with her own vision, in time she became resigned to happiness deriving from the predicted and well-trodden paths: full-time wife and parenthood. My father, as a consultant doctor, offered her some of the experiences she may have found for herself: a high degree of social respect, a community of like-minded friends, a comfortable degree of wealth and stability, and some travel to international conferences. This, then, was the model which was communicated to us, her two daughters. Measure idealism beside the cold light of practicality and what is viable in a woman's destiny.

In terms of the dream world, amongst the family only my mother could see that some elements of it might fit the model of success. One could, for example, use the dream to become a literary Oxbridge academic. Or one could, alternatively, be a genius and thus become rich through writing. Shining role models were Shakespeare who became one of the richest landowners in Stratford, or Shaw who might have been a millionaire had he lived long enough to see *My Fair Lady*. When I projected into the future, I saw myself like them, with a large white beard and someone else to do the cooking.

Mother acquired the works of my rivals so I could get to know the competition: the complete Shaw in a huge blue volume, and the complete Shakespeare with tiny writing on thin tracing paper. These writings added to my collection of language that was meaningless but magic. I learnt by heart what the fairies said, in *Midsummer Nights Dream*, and what the cockney father said in *Pygmalion*. They were sounds, like music: more magic spells.

My father, however, simply could not fit together the idea of womanhood, and the idea of the writer. He was particularly exercised on the ‘what will it look like to men’ angle of the problem. He reminded me that there were few choices for women writers. You could be mad (Virginia Woolf), an old maid (Jane Austen), or horse-faced (George Eliot). No woman writer he had ever heard of, had managed to be anything else but one of these. There were also dire consequences for the child prodigy: there was Daisy Ashford, who never wrote another word after ‘*The Young Visitors*’; or the Brontes, who were physically burnt out and all died young and unmarried. (This latter turned out to be untrue in the case of Charlotte). But it was not only women who needed to fear the treachery of the writer’s voice. Men who had pursued this as a career, starved in garrets, passed up opportunities for decent jobs and salaries, made themselves conspicuous and often died because of this (Socrates).

Yet I stood by my belief that I could give something to the world through writing. It was, in fact, akin to faith, and gave me my first intimations of a God. I could not find anything like this in the murmurings of men at synagogue: or in the hieroglyphs of Hebrew lessons: or in the strange rituals of Friday night: or in the chanting of the Haggadah story at Passover. All of these seemed to be the rituals of others, designed to organise and control. They were far from being about individual belief. I wanted, tangibly, to talk back to the ‘voice’ that said ‘write!’. My first experiment must have

been the little book of Bible stories. My second experiment was to kneel at the end of the bed, the way I had seen on television and in churches. I had seen people putting their hands together and ‘talking’ to God; and in this kneeling position, it did indeed feel like a new angle on things. This little personal ritual did not last many nights before I was ‘caught’ by my sister, who told me only Christians knelt, and thus that it was a bad thing for Jewish girls to do.

So I had my own cosmos entirely: my own idea of faith, of success and of failure. These were uncompromising. The only possible image of success: becoming a part of the sacred canon of literature, alongside Jane Austen and George Eliot, Shaw and Shakespeare. The only possible image of failure: being deluded. Actually being NO GOOD.

I feel time pressing me on, and fits of ambition that end in bitter depression because they are dreams. But no! no they are not dreams. I can make them true! And I return with renewed vigour, but a boulder stops me a yard down the road.--- I don’t think it will ever be finished. I despise it and I love it, and I dream of ambitions that are not too far away – I can reach for them but again and again they are out of reach.

Diary September 12th 1968: age 13. See facsimile above.

I had a very real metaphor for this. Playing the violin, thinking the sound you create was divine, sublime, exquisite: but everyone else can hear that you are in fact, OUT OF TUNE. My sister and I played out this metaphor each time I played the violin. To me, I could create a sound that was the heartstring made manifest: for her it was ugly, intrusive and vulgar. The violin as ‘vile-din’ was my metaphor for self-delusion.

The danger of these images were that there was only one version of success: there were no gradations that allowed compromise or accommodation of disappointments. One could not be quite good, or even very good: one could only be divine. There was no deconstruction of the idea of fame and celebrity, no attempt to draw up a personal yardstick of achievement, to humanise it, to set it in the world I knew. Nor was there any understanding that the journey from first creativity to final product is not achieved in one short leap, but through a myriad of trials and errors, uphill and downhill, constructions and deconstructions. Of course, the path could only be set

for disappointment. Not to be disabused of these myths and hopes, would be not to have grown up at all.

So I was constructing a persona for the artist, in an environment of pragmatists and scientists. Yet my parents too had had their vision. For mother it had been the farm in Israel: for dad it was music. In both cases, the vision was impractical, in their sense of the word: it did not earn them a living, there was no money in it, and it did not take them to the heart of the dominant culture. When father played the piano, he was not trying to assimilate, compromise, make money, prepare for disappointment, survive. In his own terms, there was no good *reason* to play the piano. Yet he worked painstakingly, practicing scales and repeating awkward phrases again and again, going round and round them until you would think the whole would be entirely lost. But it never was. When all the tiny work had been done, he was ready for the whole journey. A shy, modest, precise man who had been rendered almost speechless in his first years in Britain; who was completely at a loss with displays of emotion, who appeared to run tirelessly like a robot and expected others to: who had no tolerance of vulnerability or irrationality and who measured everything by its price and functionality: played a Chopin thrilling in its hugeness. The contrast between the talking father: and the speechless piano-playing father threw wide open his whole philosophy of survival and pragmatism. I knew that between the one and the other, was a mystery, and that this mystery was something to do with being an artist.

This should have been something we shared. I too loved music. I started the piano at 6 years old, but did not truly ‘fall in love’ with music until the teacher in my second year of primary school taught the class to make bamboo pipes. The experience of turning a piece of wood into a musical instrument transformed my relationship with music. Once the pipe was made, it was independent enough of piano teachers and parents, to be something I could escape with, experiment with. I made up my own tunes, loved the physicality of the wood with its knots and holes and bumps, was fascinated by the way positioning of the holes changed the sound and pitch. With this as my inspiration and structure, I began to write my own tunes; and with the tunes, worked out a way to share the process of delight I had experienced. My solution was to develop a pedagogy – a ‘bamboo pipe’ manual for making and playing the pipes. It is clearly written with an audience in mind – the ideal learner/student who might share

the same enthusiasms as I did. It leads the learner from the basics of placing and forming notes: “When playing a pipe you must remember NEVER to blow down the cork, just breath (sic) down it gently all the time” (p. 2) through to the rudiments of rhythm, major and minor keys and scales: “3/4: What does this mean? Any signature with a 4 as the lowest figure, shows that the bar is divided into crotchet beats. The top figure indicates the number of crotchets. Remember, this does NOT stand for three quarters.” (p. 3). and then practices what has been learnt with pages of graded tunes of my own invention: “Now you have mastered the basic facts of music and are entitled to a few little pieces.”(p. 5). The little book ends with suggestions for performance: “Last minute check up- Adjust your cork. Play the scale. Is it in tune? Check on the piano. Wipe your cork, yourself, your music and begin” (p. 6). This concert, however, is planned by a budding educator, and is peppered with suggestions for audience participation: “No concert is complete without fun for the toddlers. No-one will mind joining in with well-known nursery rhymes and it will liven up the audience.” (p.7). “Collected here are all kinds of tunes for all kinds of people. A few songs are old favourites, and the elderly people will be pleased to join in with these.” (p. 11). As such, (and for a child of 9 in particular), it is a model of structured invention and principled pedagogy. Its tone is conversational, yet highly controlled so there is progression from where a learner might start, towards fluency and mastery. I see that my notion of a ‘scaffolded creativity’ began, not with my teaching career at the age of 25, but with my learning at the age of 8, and that my commitment to the notion of *knowledge transformation* has all along been fired by the memory of what it meant to me as a child learning to love music by transforming it into her own language.

Learning to make and play bamboo pipes: age 9.

3. Time Practise and Held Notes H.

In this short tune, quite large gaps occur between notes, such as from D to B. Practise the following tunes. It will help you jump from note to note.

4. Gaps Between Notes N

Now let us see if you have learnt your lesson well! The following tune contains all the things you have learnt about.

5. Practise Piece

Did you remember these points?

Bars 1, 5, 7, 10, 14 - note held throughout the bar.

Bars 4, 3 - remember the notes which last half a beat.

Bars 3, 4, 6, 11 - note held for two beats.
 Bar 11 - staccato, or jump off notes.
 Bars 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6 - cover notes completely, jumps between notes.
 Now you have mastered the basic facts of music and are entitled to a few little pieces.

Cantering

Serenade

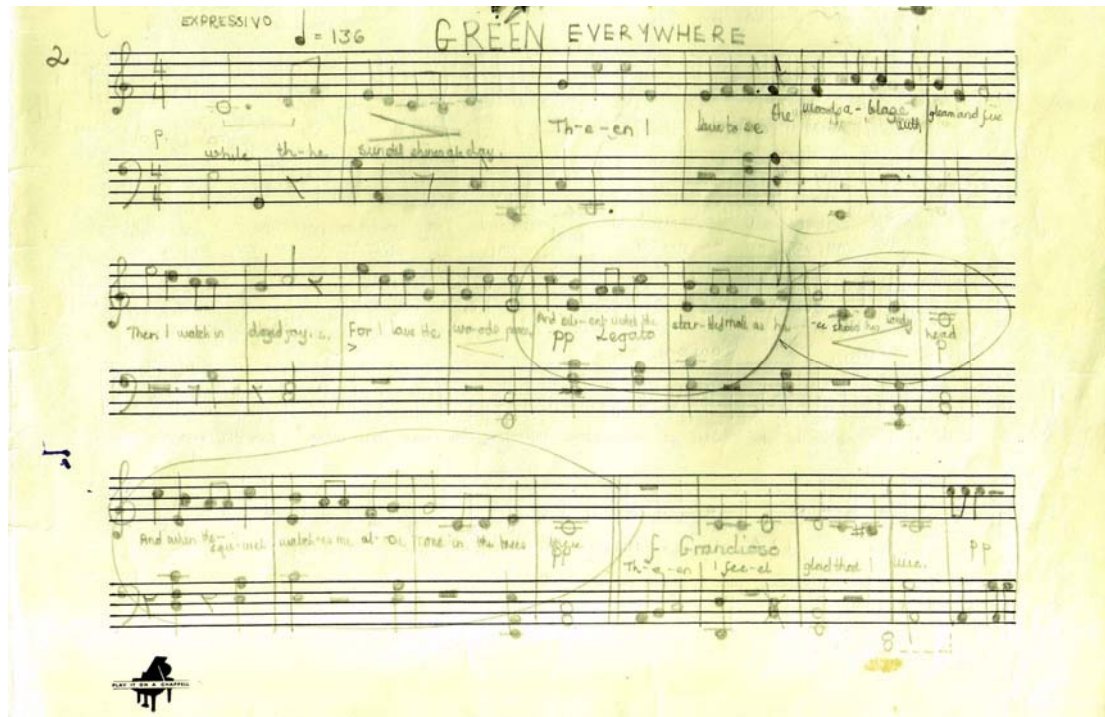
The Nightingale

Now you should be prepared for harder work and the tunes selected here for a concert.
 Last minute check up - Adjust your cork. Play the scale - Is it in

What it is also possible to see, in retrospect and as a learner, is that 'transformation' in one sphere of learning carries over into others. Because I had learnt to experiment with the bamboo pipe, I also began to experiment with, and delight in, the piano, song and eventually the violin. *The Musical Box*, as with the earlier notebooks bursting with stories, starts with pencil written songs of my own. They include a 'busy' song sung by mischievous dwarves, songs about mermaids and May Day revels, and two hymn-like songs in praise of the sun and the countryside.

While the sun still shines at day/Then I love to see the woods a-blaze with
gleam and fire/Then I watch in dazed joy. For I love the woods' peace.

Green Everywhere from The Musical Box: age 10.



O! Sun shine on me – give me light. Give me confidence for life/make my joy
as pure as peace, and let my deeds thrive in your eyes/and let my deeds thrive
in your eyes.

Au Soleil from The Musical Box: age 10.



Here, as mentioned earlier in this section, I am intrigued by the denomination-defying spirituality of the child I was, reaching out towards a life-affirming humanism, if not pantheism, in the face of the rituals and routines of north London Judaism.

My relationship with the piano teacher was an intense one: she would weep when I played with dirty nails. She was the one who noticed that I squinted at crotchets and quavers, and insisted I had my eyes tested; and she was the one who, through closed doors, forced on my parents the idea that I was an unusual child. I would listen on the stairs, hear their conversation, and my ‘inner voice’ would stand up and sing. I never admitted I had heard the conversations: and I enjoyed comparing the reported version, to the one I knew had taken place. Between one and the other, I was watered down to a child that needed to practice more and needed to take more baths. But music was never something that gave father and I a dialogue to share: more another area in which I should be disciplined.

From my father, I learnt about silence and self-expression, and the places where each were possible and preferred. In ‘English’ company, my father as a younger man was shy and blushed easily. At sixteen, he arrived in Britain with one phrase of English that an uncle had taught him, “I bicky par”. This, the uncle had said, would be extremely useful in England. It was probably not long before my father realised his phrase translated as “I beg your pardon”, and that it did not really get him very far. Luckily this first English lesson doesn’t seem to have held him back.

Within a year he appears to have integrated into his school, learnt the language, and was getting top grades in all his subjects. But I did not hear of schoolfriends, and my interpretation of many of his stories, are that study was a full-time act of survival, pushing aside all other priorities. Whether or not this was a retreat from the abrasiveness of being foreign, I cannot be sure: except that the study strategy did indeed work, and gave him, in time, a role, a language, a community, and an income. But still, the culture he now lived in was a strange and dimly understood one, and he appeared to his neighbours as odd and alien, as they did to him. As an adult, on a trip to Newcastle I met a woman who had gone on a date with him when they were in their late teens. She told me she was shocked because he appeared to be carrying a handbag, and when he reached out to pay, appeared to have his money in a *purse*. Her embarrassment was acute, and she never went out with him again. There must

have been a thousand ways in which the Newcastle community gave him subtle messages that he was strange: socialising with his mother well into his twenties, his strong accent which no-one could quite place; ('He must be from down South' a Newcastle shop assistant once said to me), his strict Slavonic self-discipline. Through these years, he developed a second persona designed for survival: in which he made minimal conversation that might give him away. Once, when he came to visit me in Hungary, he heard a naive student of mine say, "Oh how nice, to talk to a real English gentleman." Through the rest of the afternoon, he refused to speak, just smiling benignly. "I did not want to be a disappointment," he said, when the students had left. He learnt how to make conversation, as a craft, by reading conversation manuals (I once found one beside his bed); and learnt when to be quiet.

In contrast, when he was with his family, his voice came back with all its vigour. The silencing experience must have been true for all the extended family who escaped, first to Newcastle, then moved to London. My grandmother opened her house every Saturday afternoon to the Polish community, their friends, family, lovers, boyfriends, girlfriends. These Saturday afternoons were a loud raucous joyful celebration of the mother tongue. On Saturday afternoon, the English-speakers were the downtrodden minority; and as little concession was made to them, as they made to the Polish speakers the rest of the week. This language was bellowed, blustered, bullied, bantered over the tea table, and to hell with the silent minority who didn't understand them. Occasionally, a word bobbed up that fixed the subject of the conversation: *dzinzobe A-levels djinkoia momonya bjoya dzinzobe exams.*

My mother attended most of these teas, every Saturday throughout her married life until my grandmother died. The resentment was enormous. Firstly, she didn't understand a word of Polish, nor wanted or tried to. Secondly, her own family were still in Newcastle, and visits to them were squeezed out begrudgingly once a year. Some of this resentment passed down to us: that Polish was a backdrop that had to simply be tolerated, not one in which we should ever choose to participate. The table setting reinforced this. Children (all of us English-speaking) were put at a little side table, with our own trays of honey cake, Carrs water biscuits and apple pie. Sometimes we heard our names bobbing up out of the Polish miasma, and knowing it was our turn to be talked about. There was no point trying to join in, ask for a translation to check the rumours and scandals that were passing around. The Polish

family speaking normally was like anyone else shouting: and all of them together made an impossible barrage of sound. Anyone less than operatic had no chance.

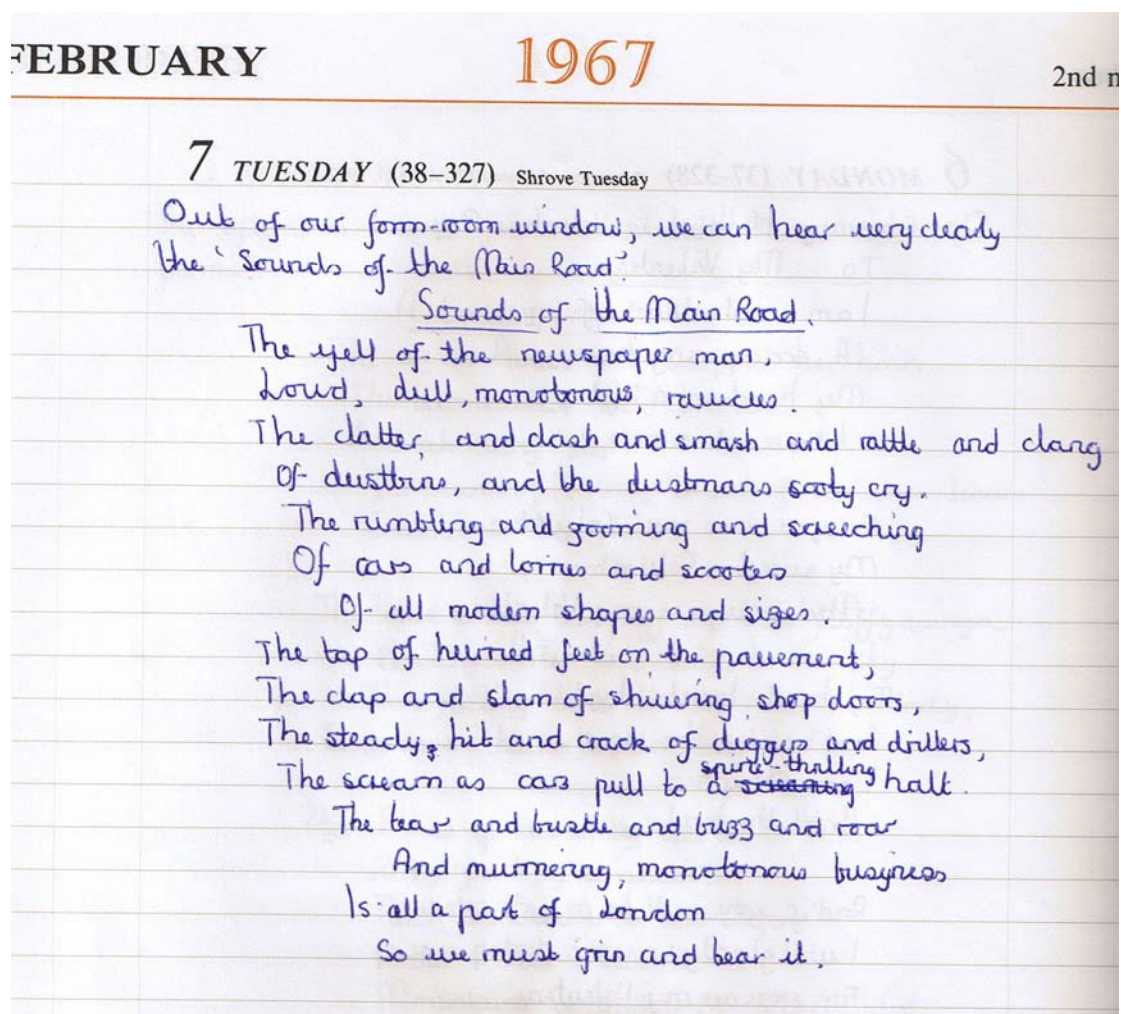
This archetypal setting was one that sealed the grandchildren into their fates: the cousins who learnt to join in and shout as loud as the others, and those who never again could raise their voices in a gathering of more than 3. It was at this weekly gaggle that our reputations too were forged and sealed: my sister as practical, well-behaved, myself the hopelessly impractical dreamer. I knew my father fed these images with episodes cherrypicked from our lives. Whilst most parents parade their children's talents and achievements, my father seemed to have a Chinese attitude to compliments: that to say something good may make the gods envious. So the family knew of my accidents, failures, inadequacies and acts of clumsiness. I would hear of these as they were relayed back to me via Polish-speaking cousins, but only rarely (and usually through visitors who did not know the house rules), did I pick up a sense of other kinds of conversations having happened, and kinder ways of being talked about.

What I understood from this was that I disappointed my father, and that being critical was an aspect of parental care. It was a problem I discussed with my mother, who had various philosophical standpoints for countering me. *He only does it because he loves you.* By highlighting one's weaknesses, perhaps they could be changed. Only someone so close will know so intimately one's weaknesses. Only someone who loves you, will want to change you and make you perfect.

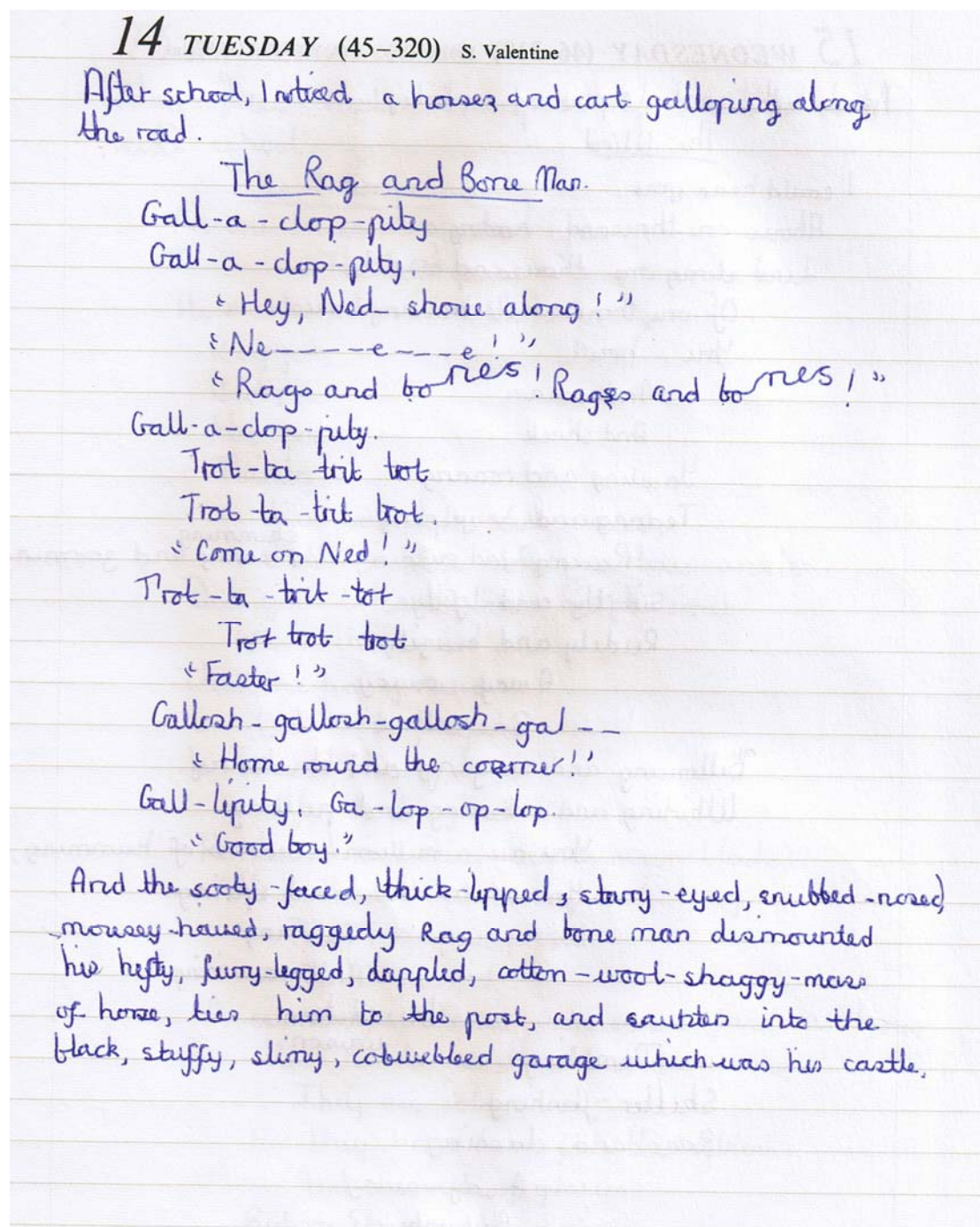
You should not take things so personally. Most things were not directed at one personally, but at the world in general. Therefore, they weren't to matter: one wasn't to *feel* them. This had a certain rational truth which could be appreciated: a person who rejected you, your ideas or work, was a rejecting person. It was not you being rejected, but the world as experienced by that person. But it failed in its emotional truth, on two counts. If a person, for example, laughed at my father's accent, I could understand this was not directed at him or me personally. On the contrary, the problem was much bigger. It was directed at anyone different, strange, or foreign. In fact, to experience this emotionally was the basis of becoming radicalised, and seeing small injustices as part of a bigger framework. So being rejected as a dreamer felt like a bigger problem: dreaming, as a whole set of possibilities, was unacceptable –

whether my dreaming, or anyone else's. Secondly, if one felt crushed and diminished, then indeed one was crushed and diminished. The authenticity of this lay in the feelings left behind: not in the intentions of the outsider. It was clear that, at the end of the day, one had one's own self-esteem and inner world to deal with and to rearrange for the purposes of survival; and this task seemed a difficult one, as a child. Another unhelpful slogan was: *you shouldn't be so sensitive* which became a catch-all phrase to mean: you should not *feel* so much. This slogan was used to police all hopes, aspirations, excitements from childhood to adulthood. Jane must be preserved from feeling in case it leads to being hurt. Feelings must be minimised.

These slogans were uniquely tailored to what my parents felt I needed: there were other slogans for my sister, who fitted far better into the required roles. It became the steady drone which drove my aspirations inwards and turned them into a secret, at least in London, and with the Spiro family. Yet for all of this, writing made my childhood fulfilled and joyful. My poetry diary is full of celebrations to my daily writing life, and perceptions of everything in it: the first crocus, a robin in the garden, a tramp on the street corner, the dustbin man, the dentist, the school play, maths homework, the rag-and-bone man, the window-cleaner, tapestry upholstery on the dining room chairs, new shoes. I wrote a poem daily throughout the year 1967, and these are happily rooted in the spaces I inhabited. They also play with language: sounds, rhythms, different forms and settings, refrains and repetition, some rhyming, some with a playful internal rhyme, some capturing the voices of people around me. They experiment with stanza shapes and lengths, prose/poetry mixes and free verse. This is a writer's workshop, collecting images and ingredients of story, fragments of life as if for future use, experimenting with unconstrained delight to discover how words work and how ideas communicate.



Poetry diary age 12: Sounds heard through the classroom window



Poetry diary age 12: the Rag-and-Bone Man and wordplay

There was another half of the family, the Newcastle half. Rumour had it that my grandmother narrowly escaped the Russian Revolution, that her past was unspeakable and we were never to speak of it; and that my grandfather was already almost an Englishman, being second generation and actually born in Britain. He was such an Englishman that he spoke geordie, his co-workers worked on a Saturday (though he never did), he ran his own stained glass company under an Anglicised name, and he supplied the leaded windows on all the front doors of Newcastle, and some of the churches too, that had been blown out during the blitz. His hands always smelt of putty and nicotine, and were covered in scratches. He would arrive home late, in his working clothes, and be shouted at by the grandmother. His work was dirty, his hours were long, he wasn't rich, and his acceptance of his family was unconditional. In the whole constellation of family, he represented the place of uncritical love.

My Newcastle grandmother's past experience was dimly known, but the actual values that passed down were all too clear. The first and foremost was the sanctity of the Jewish home. This she protected with the ferocity of a mother tiger. All the actions of childhood and adolescence were to lead towards the creation of this ancient home, sanctified by the Pentateuch and the Torah: all the actions of adulthood towards the preservation of one. There must have been a clarity and single-mindedness in this, which made life manageable, congealed as it was into a single goal. Whatever life had to offer, was either accommodated within this vision, or was utterly ejected. Nothing, and no-one, was exempt from this demarcation. As children, I at least was warmly cossetted inside this nest of acceptance, and had not yet judged it or been judged. I was later to see the consequences of this conditionality for my uncle and cousin, in the course of their exercise of free will.

* * * * *

I started my first 'full-length' book at the age of 11. I now wrote in Osmoroid fountain pen, with blue-black ink and a gold nib. The flow of the ink onto white paper was a physical joy. I wrote fluently, with hardly a word crossed out and without a smudge. The book was inspired by my new eiderdown, which was splashed with lilac blossoms, and the first handwritten version was called 'A Violet Bed'. I transcribed the notebooks painstakingly into typewritten manuscript, counted the words (56,828), renamed it *Gingerhoof Island*, packaged it and sent it to a publisher on my thirteenth

birthday. But the process started with the same spontaneity and unself-consciousness as all the others. I simply opened the first empty notebook, and waited to see what would emerge from the pen. What emerged was surprising. The main character seems to derive from a primary school curriculum obsession for Medieval London. My little boy is Medieval too, with soft shoes and a tall cap. The Medieval markets are described, and villages with wooden houses and cows in the streets. Here is Dan, who befriends the main character, Jess:

When I was a lad, I lived in a little fishin' village off the coast of Cornwall. Me and me pals, we did everything together. There was Taffy an' Drissy, Dick an' Gordon, and all of us lived along one little winding cobbled road, playing jousting in the market square. Twas the centre of the village in the market, and surrounded by little shops where men from all around came to buy and to sell, with fine silks, meat and fish, sweetmeats and spices. My! My! Jess, what a treat twas to smell the cloth and to sit among the apples and oranges and listen to the apple woman the oldest in all the village, tell us stories of her youth.

Gingerhoof Island, p. 9: age 12.

From his happy childhood, surrounded by the sights, smells, sounds and people he loves, Jess is whisked away in his sleep, and in the rays of the setting sun, to the magical Gingerhoof Island.

--- the fang of wispy red seemed to take on a form – the form of a magical creature, a creature with a glossy red back and a head, raised and proud. On the head an ivory crown formed. It was a mass of antlers – antlers like spreading branches glistening crisp and white in the half light. Its hooves like fiery stars lit the room like lanterns embossed with rubies. The creature crept closer to Jess's bed. Its eyes swirled like comets, and flakes of red sparked onto Jess's drowsy head. His eyes flickered open; the air of dreams rustled in his ears.

"A dream! A dream!" (Jess) murmured, as he stepped out into the rosy light that flooded his bed. His heavy lashes drooped over his eyes: a mist of sleep blinded him and lightened his brain. As if floating in airless space, he glided onto the sleek curved back. And with a lurch, he found himself surrounded by night, and his little room was lost far behind him in the haze of distance.

Gingerhoof Island, pp. 3 - 4: age 12.

Please see Appendix Reading 1 for the complete first chapter.

Gingerhoof Island is a land inhabited by reindeer, and forever at the point of the setting sun. But this land is no vague landscape. It has a newspaper, a constitution,

an education system, ancestral families, a Parliament. Every feature of this fantasy world strives to be workable and internally coherent; every aspect that I have perceived as part of a healthy (or ideal) community has been reconstructed in reindeer terms, for a land in which the sun is always setting. The characters have names such as White Cloud, Frost Dust, Red Alain, Orange Sun, High Rectordeer. There is a publishing company “which has become inundated with books and novels: a large percentage of these are from Cavalier Cherry and Red Arrow who writes instead of going to school”. (*Gingerhoof Island* p. 134). The school includes “teaching in every trade, and lessons are taken by experts in each field, ” and the local newspaper includes job advertisements for a miner and “a qualified farmer” to teach there. The houses “consist of four or five trees, well spaced out to form a shape as circular as possible.” (ibid pp. 135 – 136). There is no defined religion in this reindeer world, but there is a culture of enjoyment and activity: “Each separate village and valley has a committee whose work it is to make you and your family enjoy your leisure time.” One such committee organises a music festival: “The success of this music concert stimulated a love of music in all the villages and since then there has sprung up choirs and orchestras consisting of pipes made from reeds, drums from tree bark, triangles from ice and harps made from grasses.” (ibid p. 136). The forests are inhabited by a myriad of other creatures: berys “small birds, with brightly coloured wings and very sharp red beaks” who “crow exactly as the Firmament Cloud passes each Watch Mount”; leons, claudine and yorts – “plump animals with tall white ears, large eyes and a fine ability for climbing trees.”

In this fully realised parallel universe, Jess’s task is to solve the problem of an angry mountain which, at regular intervals, rises up and swallows passing reindeer. In return for solving their problem, and after many trials that take him back through Medieval England as well as throughout the landscapes of the magical island, he is crowned as the Prince of Gingerhoof Island. However, and no matter how happy he is as prince of this new world, he misses his home and longs to return.

“You are a boy and a human. You want things out of life that we cannot give you. It was foolish of us to think you could grow up among reindeers. Of course you want to go home. I understand, but will all the other reindeers? Jess, maybe you can slip away quietly and I could break the news to the nation.”

“And yet I don’t want to go. I like it so much here.”

“We have been foolish. We have been selfish. There is your home, your parents ---“

“Please, please, I want my home.”

And Jess felt the tears rolling hotly down his cheek.

“Then, my prince, you shall go home.”

(ibid p. 176).

So the novel ends, with a brief coda describing the dreamlike return that parallels Jess’s arrival in the opening chapter. In a way, the world Jess leaves behind is the imaginatively rich world of my own childhood, because adolescence began almost as soon as the last words were typed.

3.3 Where we have reached, where we are going

In exploring the stories of childhood, it is possible to position myself amongst the several debates connected with creativity at the start of this chapter and to formulate my own definition of *creative* for the purposes of this dissertation.

- **Do creative ideas derive from the stimulus of the outside world, or do they spring from the unbidden voice of a muse? By unravelling the sources, influences and shaping forces, do we minimise creative uniqueness, or illuminate it?**

My account suggests that I transformed every encounter with knowledge into something newly shaped. Hebrew, French and Latin lessons become my own language, Niassur; several years of building Roman and Medieval villages out of egg boxes, became Jess’s adventures through medieval England; practicing scales on the piano became transformed into graded tunes for the bamboo pipe and humanist hymns to the sun. Trips to the synagogue are transformed into stories about talking churches and old ladies sprouting wings. Echoed from the age of 6, are the rhythms and vocabulary of ‘writerly’ language; an understanding of how language is shaped for an audience, the ingredients and shape of story, the generic features of different text types such as pedagogic grammars and textbooks. Unravelling the sources/resources of this childhood writing elucidates the creative process, in the same way as one might unravel a bird’s nest and in so doing be in awe of the eclectic breadth and inventiveness of its maker.

- **Is creativity part of the “natural and normal state of anyone healthy in a sane and stimulating community” (Pope 2005: xvi) or is it a mystical gift?**

It must be said that the data suggests a child of extraordinary precocity, in that there is a prophetic sense of herself as a future and fully-grown writer; a sense of an audience-in-waiting to whom she speaks directly and confidently. The capacity to grow towards an aspirational sense of self, and the capacity to hone our voice to an audience are natural skills, but these appear early in my own development and well in advance of my actual life experience.

- **What is the interplay between the chaotic/free and the controlled/disciplined phases of the creative process?**

Much of the creative flow appears to be unplanned – or at least, not consciously so. There are no planning notes, and few crossings out or rewritings. Yet the creative processes I describe above have been tempered by a dogged attention to detail, a passion for internal coherence and for effective communication. The invented tunes for the pipe, the Niassur vocabulary lists and the detailed constitution of Gingerhoof Island, all suggest that rules and patterns are an important part of the creative mix. This child writer struggles to craft her ideas so they sit within the conventions of their form – novel, story, pedagogic music or grammar – and speak clearly to the audience she fully anticipates.

In terms of this current study of *knowledge transformation*, what emerges from this lived story, is that my beliefs about teaching were shaped by experiences of learning. The ‘learning’ here can be characterised as a kind of passionate engagement. I did not *learn* about music through the bamboo pipe experience, but became engaged with it in such a way that it has informed my life ever since. I did not *learn* about Medieval England but, through story, began to live it through my character Jess. The aspects of the natural world that I noticed and loved, such as the sunset, the forest, animals, became the sources of my parallel universe. Importantly, the reading, the stories that absorbed me became the ground and catalyst for my own writing.

Thus, I arrive at my own meanings of *creative* as I describe myself throughout this dissertation as a *creative writer*:

- the capacity to transform knowledge (knowledge-as-experience) into something new, unpredictable and unique
- an inner drive to continue doing this
- a belief in the value of what I am doing
- an awareness of audience, and the continued tuning of my message for this purpose
- a dedication to the discipline of writing as craft, and to a process of perpetual self-improvement

The next chapter will look at how these definitions of creativity are manifested in the writing of my first published novel, *Nothing I Touch Stands Still*, and how the emerging beliefs described here found their voice in the writer I became and am.

.

Section B I as creative writer

How does knowledge transformation manifest itself in my practice as a creative educator?

Chapter 4

Writing as finding a voice: From Finchley to Lithuania

Connection

I am aware of the specificity of the individual in time and place, and the specificity of individual experience. Thus whilst we tell the single story of the human condition, we tell a million stories and each are uniquely different and enriching

Empathy

I also empathise with others, by recognising the patterns which they and I are part of historically and socially.

This chapter continues to explore the connection between lived and created story begun in the previous chapter, and the ways in which writing reveals and engages with core values. Specifically, it describes the evolution of my novel, *Nothing I Touch Stands Still*, from concept to published novel. In the previous chapter, I recorded the ways in which, as a child, I transformed my reading and intellectual world into new and parallel ones, dealing metaphorically rather than actually with the specific community that surrounded me. I also identified my own meanings of the term *creative* as the capacity to transform knowledge (knowledge-as-experience) into something new, unpredictable and unique. This chapter explores my novel-writing process, the struggle to understand the actual life stories/histories of those I grew up with, and to honour this specificity, at the same time as transforming it symbolically into a larger, and ‘universal’ story.

4.1 Starting places

Phase One: Poland, concrete experience and feeling first

Strictly, phase one can be assumed to have started in the memories and experiences recounted in Chapter Three of this thesis. But for the purposes of this chapter, I am going to discuss the cycle from the moment that the concept of the novel first came into being.

June 1995

In June 1995, my twice yearly working visits to Poland took me to a new place called Vigry, high up by the north eastern border near Beloruss – or what was once Lithuania. I had been walking through the flat bleak fields on the north eastern border, with two colleagues who had each moved to Poland, learnt the language fluently, and dedicated their careers to Polish culture. We were walking in this bleakly remote open landscape when the heavens opened, and a torrential downfall almost blinded us. We beat our way through this shelterless terrain, the ground turning to swamp underfoot, when the scene below took place.

They all three felt it together and moved together in a line towards the place of being saved, and the person there in the threshold, another person with eyes and a nose and a face stood there watching stood still as stone but they knew she was real by the moving of the eyes and the falling of the hair under the scarf and the jumping of the hair in her breath.

As they came nearer, she stayed planted there, without moving. Her eyes and theirs focused, and narrowed. They were all human, she in the threshold newly warm from the fire inside, and they the three of them drowned into transparent ghosts of themselves, washed in and out and in by the storm.

She watched them and took in the story of them, learnt it by heart and learnt what to do. She swivelled round, like a doll on a stick. They saw the strings of her shawl spiking down her neck. She moved faster than they did, by a footstep. As they moved nearer, she moved into the door, opened it, slid behind it, and as they came into its shadow, it closed clack matt against the wall.

(from notes for *Nothing I Touch Stands Still*/diary notes)

I remember being aghast that the woman had offered us no shelter- but had established our humanity before doing so. It was not that I minded being soaked by the storm: we were not really far from home and our situation was not serious. What I felt powerfully, was that, had the situation actually been serious, her rejection would have been the same. It seemed to me a replaying of something that had happened here before. It was not my own plight I could feel in this: I could hear others, almost palpably, in this plain between Poland and Lithuania, for whom ‘not offering shelter’ was a matter of life and death.

February 1996

In February 1996, I visited another town in the north eastern corner of Poland, called Suwalki. While I was there, I was able to befriend an ex-patriot teacher of whom I could ask the questions I chose to avoid with the Poles themselves. Were there any Jews in this town? Do you know if there is any record or memorial to them? Yes, there was not merely a memorial, but in fact, it was still possible to visit the whole site of the former Jewish cemetery. My friend led me to this place on an exceptionally bleak slate-grey February day. Our journey took us through the back streets of Suwalki, where chickens ran across the wooden porches of long low houses, and women in black headscarves shooed them away from their doorways. The experience felt powerfully that I had become my own grandmother, and was running through the back streets of my Lithuanian stedl to find the small Jewish enclave where I could be safe. When we reached the place which had been the cemetery, what I saw, and later recorded in my notebook, was this:

In the middle of the field was a wall. It was impossible to ignore because the rest was so flat, a snow desert, and so far from anything standing that man had made. It had wandered in from a town, and stayed there.

I took to the field. Every footstep piped down into a tube of snow, and I loped towards the wall, the wall loped towards me, my boots picking up giant moulds of snow with each step.

Nearer to it, the stone sent out a layer of heat. I scraped the frost from the surface, and as it lifted onto my glove, images hove into view under the cobweb of snow. Each piece was covered with tight stone scribblings, Hebrew words, some Russian, names and pictures. There was half a Rachel with her last letters butted in beside an Avram, and an Eva with a wrist cut at the hand, a Jacob with a lion's paw on his head, and a Rebecca with half a holy book.

It was a wall of tombs, broken tombs that had been snapped off like teeth and crisscrossed in together. This had been the cemetery, this field: all that was left a single standing jigsaw puzzle of people and their picture descriptions.

(from diary notes)

I knew this scene was haunting in a way I could not resist.

I knew it was the beginning of a long story: mine, my family's, the unknown people carved on the tombs. I knew that this, and the accumulated images of loneliness and rejection, were primal ones that belonged to my ancestry, and that I had a collective responsibility to speak of it. I knew that it was the beginning of a profoundly compelling creative project, the moment described by Seamus Heaney as a "marriage between the geographical country and

the country of the mind.” (Heaney 1980: 131)

4.2 Writing as journey

To take the story further, to honour the specificity of what I had seen and experienced. I knew that I needed to *know* more. There can, after all, be no knowledge transformation without knowledge, and – as Chapter Three showed – to date I had been gloriously uninterested in the stories and history of my Polish family.

Phase Two: Story as a voyage of the soul

The question was: what had gone BEFORE this scene in the Suwalki field, and what led up to it? Before, in that there were people who had lived in this town, who did so no longer, whose community had disappeared, and whose names were recorded on the stones; before, in that these stones had once been brutally broken up and ripped from their burial places; before, in that these stones had been lovingly reassembled, and this story would have been an extraordinary one of resurrection and courage; before, in that there were a complexity of stories in my own life, that had led me to this place in the empty field. Everything that interested me, happened before this moment and not after; but in order to access it, I needed another journey – and it could not be my own.

A good place to start was with my uncle, Julek Tigner, who had married into our family in 1949. The fact that he had ‘married in’, rather than being of my father or mother’s side, was significant. The maternal story had been so traumatic, that we were sworn to non-intervention, and forbidden to ask or enquire as to its details. The paternal story had been a more urban one, and had involved a retreat from Poland in 1938 to Newcastle. The main thrust of the Spiro survival was business, and the children had been mercifully saved from the bitter experiences that were recorded in the northern Polish landscape: but not so with Uncle Julek. He had escaped from Poland on foot and taken this very route into Lithuania, sheltering for many months in Vilna before continuing eastwards.

During a one year cycle I recorded my uncle telling the story of his life and flight from Cracow in 1939. This process of recording history was curiously full of obstacles. Friends who had shared the escape with him, and who arrived during our recordings to have tea or play bridge, contradicted his memories, or entered into diatribes about the uselessness

of the exercise. *Who wants to know about a life that is so insignificant?*

Some members of the family were jealous: *There's nothing interesting or clever about Julek. Why choose him?* – or the reverse: *He isn't exactly typical. His story is quite unusual, so what does it show about anything?* In other words, this process of oral history-making was, unexpectedly, turning into a collective act which everyone in the community joined in on. My first cousins, Julek's children, had different versions of their own of the same story: so the recording process became a hall of mirrors, with versions of versions of versions, each only vaguely representative of the other.

Then there was the factor of Julek himself. I knew these were the last months when such a memoir would be possible, and I wanted his own words and his own voice reflected in the story. His memory was receding, and it was true, sometimes a scene would repeat but with its edges blurred and its characters distorted. I knew what I captured would be somewhere in a half-light, but surely all history was this?

But when I shared the written transcripts, another species of problem arose. The family objected – indeed were offended- that the transcripts were *not grammatical*. Couldn't I write in grammatical English? What kind of insult was this, that I was writing in a childlike Polish-English half-language? Now the fever of celebrity was upon him, my uncle felt this language was letting the side down. He decided what he needed for his memoir was a *professional*.

This 'empasse' had a painful poignancy. For 60 years most of my family had functioned in a language that was not their own. To me, the interlanguage they operated in was a thing of beauty, redolent with the echoes of their mother tongue – its idioms, its humour, its extraordinary consonant clusters. What I wanted was to record this: but of course, how naive I was not to understand how far this was from their own aspirations. Czesław Miłosz, the Polish poet, describes the pain of detachment from the mother tongue – even while being ashamed of the uses to which it has been applied in his own lifetime.

*Faithful mother tongue,-----
You were my native land; I lacked any other.
I believed that you would also be a messenger
between me and some good people
even if they were few, twenty, ten*

or not born, as yet.

without you, who am I?

Only a scholar in a distant country,

a success, without fears and humiliations.. (Milosz in Astley 2002: 336)

While my uncle and his family began phoning ‘professionals’ who could write in decent English, I agreed to sanitise the transcripts, and turn them into the good school prose they wanted.

His story, however, reveals values which had a profound influence on the family: a passion for community, generosity, and a belief in life and its power to regenerate. Julek describes his first night of flight from Cracow:

One Jewish woman who lived in a small flat at the back of a shop, said to us: “There’s no room in the flat, but you can all sleep in the shop on the counter.” So that night, six of us slept on the shop counter. It seemed only a few hours later that she woke us up with hot milk and bread. “You must be on your way. The Germans are just an hour away.” --- When I tried to give her some zloty for the night and the food, she said, “No, no, all I want is that, if you survive and are successful, give it to someone who needs it.” After that, I never refused anyone who needed something from me.

Julek Tigner’s story, recorded by Spiro, J. in Etzbah Elohim: 10

In 1997, I followed my uncle’s story back to the places he had described: the streets, the family fur shop, synagogue, youth club and cafes where he had grown up, photographed what I saw, and collated photos, my Cracow diary and Julek’s memoir into a booklet for each member of the family. Here is my diary description of the main square in Cracow:

The main square in the Jewish quarter, Plac Nowy, has revisited its past since Spielberg’s film *Schindler’s List* made it acceptable and commercially interesting to do so. There are several kosher cafes with klesmer groups playing regularly, a Jewish bookshop which includes an inventory of all the families who had lived here before the deportations; and the Jozef synagogue which is open to the public. Inside is a museum of Jewish culture, including an ‘anniversary plaque’ from the Tigner synagogue. It is so clearly a place that was meant to be the heart of a community, its prayers, youth clubs, evening walkabouts, festivities, schools and school processions, carnivals and funerals, dating and dining, talking and discoursing, exchanging of books, trade secrets, party invitations and philosophies. But all that is left is a commercial cut-out of what there once was, and the empty spaces where they all once were.

Cracow diary, April 1997

The book was called *etzbah elohim: the finger of God* in honour of the determining moment

in the story, the ‘moment of reversal’ which saved Julek’s life. He was visiting his aunt in Lvov and was packed and ready to travel home to Cracow on the next train.

We were all standing in the corridor, saying goodbye. I had my rucksack on and was ready to go, when the doorbell rang. We were all terrified. No-one wanted to open the door. But the ringing just continued. It was a telegram messenger, delivering a telegram for Losia from her brother in Copenhagen. It said: “Leave everything and go immediately to Oszmiana. Find a Mr. XY and he will take you across the border to Lithuania and I will take care of you from there. Don’t delay departure.” Losia read the telegram and said to me, “Julek, you are not going back to Cracow. You are going to Oszmania. I cannot go. I can’t leave Irka and my grandson here and I think I’ll be better off staying in Lvov, but you must go and go tonight.” Had the messenger come one minute later I would already have been on my way to Cracow. This is how God decides and this was the Etzbah Elohim which guided me.

Julek Tigner’s story, recorded by Spiro, J. in Etzbah Elohim: 14

Please see Audio-Visual Files 2: Poems and Stories

Clip 2: Hungarian Poem

Clip 3: Polish poem accompanied by photos and music from the journey to Krakow.

Text of the poems are in Volume 2 Appendix Readings 4 and 5

In tandem with the lived story of Julek’s life and my own journeys to Poland, were the narratives of others which nourished my understanding of the world he had lived in, and its connection with the collective experience. These narratives gave me insights into home life - food, libraries, worship (Richmond 1996), daily life in Krakow (Hoffman 1997), personalities and tensions in the stedtl (Jacobson 1998), the lives of children able to leave on the Kindertransport (Childs and Wharton 1989), the rapid closing in of their lives (Scharf 1989, Sakowska 1995), their songs and prayers (Flammer, Leiser and Barreaux 1985, Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues 1995). When I turned to my own novel, I was ‘living’ within their stories through this knowledge, and their voices were ready to emerge through my narrative.

4.3 Writing as finding a voice

Phase Three The poetic leap of self into story

I had yet to find a way of finding my own voice within this, that would transform these lived stories into a narrative that I could fully own. Up till now, I had the diary accounts of my experiences in Suwalki and Cracow and the stories of my uncle’s journey. I had the knowledge of detail such as: the home-made vodka which was both purple and powerful; the horse and droschka which took the family out into the

countryside for holidays; the safe houses that sheltered the refugees in the forest; the trains they clung to, the open ditches they hid in, and a great deal of further reading besides that expanded, confirmed, and deepened what I knew of Julek's story. But *I* still needed to make the poetic leap into the narrative, the "metaphorical confrontation" with myself that would turn this cluster of scenes into driven narrative. (Cox and Thielgard 1987: 45). :

The poetic self is willing to put itself on the line and to take risks. These risks are predicated on a simple proposition: this writer's personal experiences are worth sharing with others. Messy texts make the writer a part of the writing project. (Denzin 1997: 225)

The catalyst, or alchemic transformation, came with a what if? question. What if I had happened to be born a generation ago, in the same situation as Julek's sisters, the ones left behind? How would the *I* have felt, behaved and lived, dropped into this very different world? What if I were to compare that hypothetical girl, with this one? From this evolved the idea of a double narrative and a specific time-lapse between them: one girl living in Poland in 1939 in the wake of the Nazi occupation of Poland, and another girl living in 1989 in north London, the year the Berlin wall came down. How would their two lives compare or run parallel? What if both had potentially the same spirit and yet were shaped by such different worlds? - if, in fact, they are blood relations - say, grandmother and grand-daughter. Now, imagine the contemporary girl, as I did, ends her journey by the memorial wall in northern Poland: and the 1939 girl ends her journey as a refugee in north London, each travelling in opposite directions across Europe. What if they somehow 'cross' - spiritually, or meta/physically, on the way?

Here I had everything I needed: as Conrad said in the quotation cited in Chapter 2, "There was room enough there to place any story, depth enough there for any passion, variety enough there for any setting, darkness enough to bury five millions of life." (Conrad 1920: 6). The issues, sensibilities, personal mythologies this plot structure offered were huge: belonging and not belonging, separation and loss, Julek's own story of regeneration and starting again (and Kassim the French Soldier from Chapter Three), the different meaning of 'escape' for the 1939 and the 1989 girls, the different options for 'finding themselves' and discovering their personal courage.

With this clear vision of the parallel women, fifty years apart, I set about planning them, being them, hearing them. The 1939 grandmother character adopted composite characteristics of all grandmothers I had known – including my own. Rosa is feisty, brave, clever, strong, and is not prepared to be left behind – as the sisters were in Julek’s story. The 1989 girl has had few opportunities to understand her own strengths, having been sheltered and cosseted by an over-loving family, so her slant on the world is freshly naïve..

To place Laura psychologically and physically in the story, I developed episodes in her childhood which were significant – even quintessential – moments for me too. The Laura stories were great opportunities for creative play. I ‘became’ her, speaking in her voice as she grew from child to adolescent to young woman in the course of the novel. Here is an extract from Laura’s childhood. She has in error joined the Christian prayers at school, not realising that she belongs to the much smaller group that meets in the classroom down the corridor.

I had never seen anything like it. There was a picture of a man in a white nightie with brown hair down to his shoulders and strange brown eyes and there was a lightbulb round his head. He seemed quite nice, but I didn't know anyone like that at all. Polly and Lisa seemed to know him quite well and even knew his name.

Eventually the mistake is realised by the teachers, and she is led away to Jewish prayers down the corridor.

the words in English made me tingle all over and made my ears go red.

Let these words which I command you this day, be always in your heart, teach them diligently to your children and speak of them in your home

yes and on your doorposts and foreheads I will do what you say and the words will shower down like great walls of thunder

we are from the desert all of us in the room with the baking sand and men with rolling white beards and sticks

inside us we are all wearing white sheets and veils and wash our clothes in the Dead Sea

inside our plaits and white socks we are ancient which means very very very old because Jessie beget David beget Deborah beget Susannah beget Samson beget Daniel beget Hagar beget Rebecca beget Rachel beget Sarah beget Peter beget Jonathan beget Jacob beget Laura

beget means to have a baby

if you were beget you lived in a tent and wore a veil if you were a girl and collected water in a vase from the well

In the other Sembly room they must have had different sorts of grandmas or maybe fathers who wore nighties.

(Spiro 2002: 17 – 19)

There are more epiphanies for Laura, struggling to understand her identity and place herself in the outside world. Here she describes her first experience of singing with boys in the school choir:

We began the Kyrie Elieson with Miss Doubleday on the piano and the girls came in with papery voices and floated off into little puffs of ash. Then the boys' voices rolled in and I was knocked through the back of my neck into a beanstalk world with giants rolling boulders round the edges of the world. I could feel them thumping behind me with their giant feet, and the benches were purring like cats. The sound through the floor grew trees up through my heels and washed my stomach dark like a plum.

"Now boys, you need to watch the beat, not each other!" Miss Doubleday shouted. I could feel the dinosaurs snorting behind me, and the giants with troll black hair thundering through the mountains like yetis. But when I turned round to have a quick look, I was shocked to see the row of boys still there, some of them spotty and with dandruff on their blazers.

(Spiro 2002: 97) **Please see Appendix 1 Reading 6 for the complete episode, and a broadcast version in Audio-Visual Files 2: Poems and Stories. Clip 1/Choirs of Angels (BBC Radio Devon).**

Meanwhile Rosa, became a symbol for all those who had left their lives behind, by train, boat, on foot. Here is Rosa on her last journey out of Poland, lucky enough to have time to leave by train (as my uncle did), her lover left behind on the station platform. Like Losia in Julek's journey, he has chosen to stay for the sake of family – in this case, his elderly father who would not have survived the journey.

The train was moving in a tunnel of freezing darkness and there seemed never to be landscape, only the laughter of the guards in the corridor drinking vodka and playing cards, the long rattled breathing of the old woman snoring in the corner of the carriage, the chundering of her grown-up sons in their sleep. And Rosa sat upright looking out through the window at her own image, a ghostly negative in the glass. All through the journey, the rattling, the snoring, the chundering, the vodka-drinking, Jacob repeated through her as if they had turned inside out and it was she left behind and him on the train. The landscape crumbled as they passed it, broke off and hurtled out into the blackness so she wanted to stop the trees and barns flash by, shout "Let me keep that," before they passed and crumbled and were lost.

(Spiro 2002: 88)

She also came to symbolise for me all the language learners I had ever known, (including myself living in Hungary and Switzerland), whose flight forced them to

function without their mother tongue. I grew up with empathy for the second culture learner, was fascinated to know how my family and their large circle of resettled compatriots, had come to learn English. None had learnt comfortably, or even tediously, in a school class. One had learnt by reading a dictionary while in hiding between the floorboards of a Warsaw apartment block. My grandmother had learnt by reading everything she could lay hands on in English, whether she understood it or not. My uncle learnt by giving the other boys English lessons, always being three words ahead of his pupils. Chapter 3 described how my father started off with three words of English, “I bicky par” which he was told would take him anywhere: and learnt the rest within a year of arriving in England, by studying and reading so he ruined his sight. There were no kindly teachers to mediate for any of them, no communicative methods to make it palatable: and yet they learnt it anyway, to brilliant effect. Rosa represents, and is in honour, of all of them.

In the afternoons for one hour she sat in the public library and read at the no smoking table. Her favourite was the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary. Each day she read ten new words, starting with A. She learnt *Aardvark*, *Aaron's beard* (a name), *abaca* and *abaciscus* on the first day, but even with the dictionary explanation she couldn't really understand them, and there didn't seem to be any opportunities to use them. So the next day she started volume 2 and learnt *marl*, *marlite* (a variety of marl), *marmalade* and *marmoset*. These seemed more useful words, because she knew for a fact that *marmalade* really existed because Mr. Gobelman had a pot with the word written on it. Anyway, with words written in front of her she had hope again, even if she couldn't understand them; and she could talk quietly into books and they quietly back to her. They were the best conversations of the day. (Spiro 2002: 52).

The Laura/Rosa roles, and the engagement with character at a symbolic level, helped me to ‘find myself’ in the narrative and drive it forward with ‘passionate conviction’. Hunt writes: “When a writer says that she has ‘found her voice’ it seems to me she is saying that she has developed a deep connection in her writing between her inner life and the words she places on the page” (Hunt 2000: 16). It is true, that through Rosa and Laura I was able to explore again the sources of my own identity and the ‘collective memory’ of my community. The opportunity to slide between inner and outer voices, child and adult, to become Rosa and Laura, was liberating and empowering. Like Heaney, when he found his voice as a young poet, “I felt that I had let down a shaft into real life”. (Heaney 1980: 41)

Please see Appendix 1 Reading 6 for further episodes from *Nothing I Touch Stands Still*

4.4 Writing as communication

In Section 3.3 I explored the meanings I attach to the term *creative*. Amongst these were:

- an awareness of audience, and the continued tuning of my message for this purpose
- a dedication to the discipline of writing as craft, and to a process of perpetual self-improvement

During the incubation of the novel, I was aware of the continuous need, not only to find my own voice, but to chisel and tune it so that it could best be heard and understood by an audience. My process of ordering/crafting functioned not only at the level of plot and characterisation, but on a sentence-by-sentence level as I might continuously tune a violin. Some of the chapters and extracts were sent for scrutiny to outside readers, and their comments and criticisms then entered the crucible of my own beliefs in the project.

The publication of the novel in 2002 constituted the end of opportunity for further improvement and the beginning of its accountability as a free agent. Here, I awaited the judgement of my audience, as to whether or not I had fulfilled my own claims to be *creative*. Below are a small sample of the many messages I received via the publisher or email, in response to the novel. Amongst the messages are included:

- Friends reappearing from the past who recognised ‘coded’ references from the past embedded in my story
- Friends and family who were expecting direct synergy with shared knowledge about ‘real life’ and did not find it there
- Readers who found surprising parallels with stories of their own
- Readers for whom it triggered ideas for projects of their own

You show lifes true reality with all its mysteries beautifully. Like a cobweb - you hardly see it at all, unless its a rainy day and you pay close attention to it. Once you do find out its all there, you realise there is even more you had no idea of. (Carina)

You've captured so many things, from the psychology of being a member of the minority, to the suffocating feeling one gets of being TOO jewish, the jewish woman, the young girl who wants to throw off her shaCKLES, my God it's just so great. (Karen)

I am full of admiration for how beautifully it is written and the wealth of information you have included. It has also prompted me to get in touch with my family to ask them to write what they can remember of our family history. I think that their memories have been too painful for them to tell us much, but you have reminded me now important it is to have a record, for future generations. (Adrienne)

very moving how you moved (Rosa) back in time so the awareness of tragic and irretrievable loss is deepened very delicately. I made notes on my Easyjet tissue: I am only a Genital but I too have been a slave in Egypt. I have also wanted to escape to MacGillicuddy's Reeks. There is a fresh look at everything as seen through a child's eyes. Or is it? There is also a sense of growing wisdom which is light-hearted and deep-rooted. Many thanks for enchanting me! (Martin)

Some of the characters and stories you tell I can relate to people I know and to real life experiences. The story of Michael and Mary standing outside in the rain reminds me so much of Philip and his non-Jewish girlfriend sheltering in the garage from the rain that I wondered if I had once told you that story. (Molly)

by page 20 or 30 I was completely hooked, couldn't put it down. I was reading it in the bath, on the train, in bed, between clients and meetings, in snatched 3 minutes while I was waiting for the water to heat so I could put the potatoes in etc. I finished it last night and feel quite lost. It must feel very odd to create something so alive and then send it out into the world to get inside other people. I think it is something to be extremely proud of. I hope and trust that you are. and I know it probably sounds corny but I feel quite grateful to have had the luck to have come across it and been able to read it. Thank you. (Laura)

I'm still reading and am at Chapter 6. I read it at night before bed to clear my mind and prepare for Dreamland. I loved your rules on page 39--so very funny to read. Leo is just horrible. (Christian)

It is really quite intense stuff but also very funny in places. Yes, I have tried to match characters with real people but you have mixed them up a bit I think. Another thing, Laura can't be you because you would never kick someone? Also someone has a birthday of 17th August which you have probably forgotten is mine. I wonder if that is significant? (Paul)

4.5 Writing as a reader

What emerges for me as researcher, reviewing this account of the writing process, are the ways in which knowledge is transformed into connection and empathy; the lived story blends with recounted story, and the connections formed a third, different, and richer narrative. These narratives of 'others' generated a bridge between I;Thou which was the place where

the creative process took place. Writing was the process of bringing to the surface this third, new narrative, this new ‘landscape of the mind’ created by the textures, patina, diversity of the stories I had entered. In this creative crucible, my own experience in Poland was not privileged above the others of Uncle Julek, Hoffman, Jacobson, Sharf or others; in the alchemic process, all became as one. Chapter Six explores further this process of transforming knowledge into empathy, connection and new story.

I was also aware of being my own ideal reader. This ‘inner reader’ sat inside the writer throughout the process, reacting harshly, scornfully, sympathetically or ecstatically, but never silent. She honed the final version into shape, proofread it for me, and checked that it told a story well.

The novel writing process gave me complete freedom to find and develop the voice I wanted and explore my own landscapes. My audience was ‘ideal’, my ‘reader’ and ‘writer’ selves responded to one another as we went along. In contrast, Chapter Five considers what happens to this narrative voice when audience is NOT self - where there is a distinct ‘other’ reader during the writing process: editors, house styles, word counts and plot restrictions.

Chapter Five

Writing for audience: From Myth to Word Count

Authenticity

I am only prepared to act through my core beliefs, rather than through desire for power, status, recognition, or fashion. I regard my own authenticity as acting always in congruence with (my core) beliefs.

Chapter Four explored the process of ‘transforming’ life experience and researched knowledge into literary form. The journey to do so involved, crucially, the search for a poetic self/voice, and in this case, the search offered me total freedom, both in terms of plot and theme, and in terms of my creative play with language. This chapter considers another challenge: commissioned writing for educational contexts, in which the reader is a language learner with a threshold level of understanding precisely defined by editors and publisher. How does such a project transform into something that is ‘authentic’ in the way stated above, and central to my core values? It will explore these questions with references to two projects:

- collections of creation myths for language learners: *Place of the Lotus, The Twin Chariot* (Spiro: 1990)
- stories for two collections of commissioned stories for language learners, collected under the themes *London Tales* (2003) and *A Twist in the Tale* (2004).

5.1 Writing and the notion of authenticity

As a language teacher in the 1980’s, ‘authenticity’ referred to ‘real world’ texts written without conscious adaptation to reader level: “in other words, materials which have not been designed especially for language learners and which therefore do not have contrived or simplified language.” (Hedge 2000: 67). There was a culture of respect for these ‘real-world’ texts, as essential ingredients of the communicative classroom; texts written precisely with language level in mind were viewed as giving learners inadequate exposure to the ‘language in use’ that they needed. Hedge (2000) goes on to say, “the argument is quite simply that if the goal of teaching is to equip students to deal ultimately with the authentic language of the real world, they should be given opportunities to cope with this in the classroom.” (ibid: 67). In its worst

case, it meant that writing for learners involved “rejecting anything interesting in favour of anything dull on the assumption that learners of English come to reading as blank and unliterary and inhuman as computers. For example, *she was coming to the evening of her life* becomes *she was very ill*.” (Brumfit cited in Day and Bamford 1998: 75).

Notions of authenticity have moved forward significantly since then. It is now understood that all texts are honed and fine-tuned to communicate to an audience, so to shape a text for the language learner is no different to any other modification; nor need it involve ‘contrived’ language any more than any other context-sensitive writing. ‘Authenticity’ as a notion became more generous and inclusive: “An authentic text is one whose primary intent is to communicate meaning. The relevant consideration here is not for whom it is written but that there has been an authentic communicative objective in mind.” (Day and Bamford 1998: 60). It is also now understood that language learners carry into second language reading all the skills and enthusiasms of first language reading. Modern reading schemes such as the Cambridge Readers Library do “not fall into the trap of treating the learner as a child and equating a low language level with a low intellectual level or limited experience of life”. (Prowse 2001: 1). This shift in understanding has been good for writers. It means that publishers now commission ‘authentic’ stories rather than “watered-down versions of the classics” (ibid: 1) and allow writers to make natural and intuitive adaptations to his/her audience. In my own experience of writing for language learners, the following changes have taken place over a 10-year period:

1990 Edward Arnold Readers series: metaphors and similes were not ‘allowed’. The vocabulary list permitted, for example: superordinates (eg. trees, flowers), but not hyponyms (eg. oak, ash and elm, rose, violet and bougainvillea); primary colours such as red and black, but not intermediary colours such as pink or grey. At the first stages, there were to be no subordinate clauses, and only simple tenses – present and past, but no future forms. There were to be no passive forms or reported speech, and only a limited set of synonyms for *he/she said*. For example, *asked* is allowed, but not *replied, told, retorted, explained, remarked*.

2002 English Language International series: as an author, I was invited simply to modify my language intuitively for the selected level. However, there were constraints on the story development. There were to be no sub-plots, and at the earlier

levels no more than three main characters. The stories had to be set in the present day with a linear timescale; there were to be no flashbacks or ‘flash-forwards’. Within these constraints I was permitted to write freely and ‘naturally’, designing my stories for my specific audience.

There was, however, a further difference in my experience of the two projects. In the 1992 project, the publishers’ list of rules was my ‘other’ reader, monitoring my language and pruning back my excesses. Some examples of figurative language were allowed to sneak their way into the story, on the grounds that they made sense within the context; but otherwise, I could measure myself objectively beside the publisher guidelines. In the second 2002 project I had no such structural list; instead an editor acted as my ‘other’ reader, working in detail with the text on a line by line basis.

This chapter will look at these two very different processes, and will ask the question: given the different meanings of ‘authentic’ in the language teaching community, what about my own authenticity as a writer? Was I still engaging with that ‘metaphorical confrontation with self’ (Cox and Thielgard 1987: 45) I had met in writing the novel? Was I still using language to “let down a shaft into real life” as Heaney had done (1980: 41) when finding his poetic self? (Chapter 3). Or had I simply given in to dullness, in the way Brumfit described above, turning the poetic “she had come to the evening of her life”, to the functional “she was very ill” (Brumfit 1998)?

5.2 Language as rune: *The Place of the Lotus and The Twin Chariot*

The task of writing within strict linguistic parameters might appear to be a debilitating imposition for a writer; yet everything explored in Chapters Three and Four suggest that ‘creativity’ often thrives through an interweaving of discipline/order/constraint and freedom/chaos. In these earlier chapters, I suggested a process in which the two evolved together, the idea shaped by its ‘rules’ and vice versa. My novel, for example, evolved its own ‘rule’ of alternate granddaughter/grandmother chapters, in order to fulfil its concept; my childhood language, Niassur, developed a system whereby living things were differentiated from the non-living by different articles – concept again leading to rule, and made manifest through it.

However, in the case of the invitation to write for the Edward Arnold Readers Library, two very different projects – almost ‘left’ and ‘right’ brain projects – came together to fulfil my brief.

The first project was a long-term interest in myth/story/history/religion and the overlap between them. For several years, I had been collecting examples of myths that answered questions about the world: How did light and day separate from night? why are there so many languages in the world? The answers offered by different world cultures, their differences and similarities, seemed to me perennially haunting. Countries of intense heat such as the African continent and Latin America, had early creation stories of the earth and sky being on top of one another and needing to be forcibly separated. An African myth tells of earth and sky being separated by women winnowing the maize and beating the sky higher and higher. The Egyptian myth tells of the sky as a huge goddess laid across the universe. Many cultures had myths that helped explain the seasonal dying and rebirth of nature: gods that were beheaded annually such as the green man, the Indian goddess Kali with the angry red face who was the goddess of both destruction and rebirth, Osiris the Egyptian god who was strewn and scattered annually. Many cultures perceived water as the source of life (such as the Joshua tribe of North America), the birthplace of goddesses (such as Venus), or the source of mystic separation from life (as in the Arthurian myth, or the Irish myths of sea travellers). It is the gateway between life and death, between the world and the otherworld.

Now, in a different and parallel universe, I find myself grappling with the publishers’ rules listed above, experimenting with the rhythms and sounds it generates.

- superordinates (eg. trees, flowers), but not hyponyms (eg. oak, ash and elm, rose, violet and bougainvillea);
- primary colours such as red and black, but not intermediary colours such as pink or grey.
- no subordinate clauses
- Level 2: only simple tenses – present and past, but no future forms. Level 4: sparing and careful introduction of past progressive and present perfect forms.
- no passive forms or reported speech,
- a limited set of synonyms for *he/she said*. For example, *asked* is allowed, but not *replied*, *told*, *retorted*, *explained*, *remarked*.
- Sparing and careful introduction of figurative language, particularly at Level 4
- No abstract nouns.

- Clear cohesion between sentences: minimal substitution of nouns for pronouns, or ‘empty’ subjects such as ‘**There** was’ ‘**It**’s a nice day’.

Thus, I experiment, these sentences are feasible:

I saw the black tree. It spread its leaves.

but not this:

It’s a willow I see, reflected in the water, grey-black and velvety like a bat’s wing spreading over the lake.

On reviewing my choices, I came to see that the ‘limited’ language had another beauty: it read like a translation from a mystic proto-language, with an almost runic simplicity, like a Norse saga or a set of hieroglyphs carved on rock. In this realisation came the ‘alchemic moment’, in which I understood that my new ‘learner’ stories were to be these myths, retold as if translated from their ancient sources.

The simple past and simple pastness

In this runic world, there is no sub-divided notion of the past. For example, these are disallowed:

The man with the black eyes used to smoke tobacco every day.

The man with the black eyes was smoking tobacco.

The man with the black eyes had smoked tobacco every day for a century.

Instead, my first story, *In the Beginning there was Water: a myth of the Joshua people* (Level 4) starts with:

The man with the black eyes smoked tobacco.

Everything that happens to ‘the man’ is pure past tense; what happened a moment ago is as equally ‘past’ as the beginning of the universe, grammatically and perhaps philosophically too.

The man with the black eyes smoked tobacco.

The house sat on the water like a bird. And all around there was cloud. The man with the black eyes smoked. He smoked, and sat, and worked.

And then something strange happened. The clouds moved.

First Man stood and watched. The land moved towards him. The trees became clearer and clearer. Their lines were sharp and black. And the land moved like a fall of snow. Nearer and

nearer.

The Giver moved to the door. He blew rings of smoke across the land.

(Spiro 1990a: 12 – 14 **Please see Appendix 1 Reading 2 for the complete story)**

The story is also deliberately punctuated with the refrain: *The man with the black eyes smoked tobacco*. From a language learning point of view, there is opportunity to internalize the rhythm and structure of the phrase: the man with ----- . From the ‘mythical’ point of view, it underlines the importance of both ‘the man’ and the act of smoking. In fact, he is the Giver and Maker himself, Xowalaci (who is eventually named); and in the act of blowing rings of tobacco, mystic weed of the Joshua people, he creates the world.

Yet the story is not so simple. Its final stages are explored through a pared-down dialogue, a sequence of ‘*said*’s and simple sentences, between the Giver/Maker and the First Man, his companion in the hut on the water. As the land lifts out of the water for the first time in creation, something unexpected is found there:

The two of them stood by the door of the hut. They looked silently.
“Wait, there is something here I don’t like,” said the Giver.
There was a line in the sand: a deep line burned from north to south of the endless beach. They looked, silently. The clouds moved across the sand. Then the Giver said, sick at heart,
“They are footprints.”
“That’s not possible” said First Man.
“It is not possible. But that is what they are.” -----
“Someone else is here,” said the First Man.
“Someone walked on the bed of the sea, before I gave the sea a bed,” said the First Giver. -----
“There is something about this I don’t like,” said Xowalaci, the Giver. And the waves washed over the land.

(Spiro 1990a: 17- 18)

In this ‘runic’ language, the dialogue must truly ‘go somewhere’ in terms of plot movement. The words between the two first creatures on earth need to be without clutter, unambiguous and without nuance. There is also a sense of a new ‘rule’: to say something once is serious: to say something twice is very serious. The two ‘first creatures’ are ‘inventing’ language through these first pared down linguistic steps.

The simple present and the universal present

While the past simple tense has a specificity about it: *he smoked tobacco on the day the world was created* – the simple present is the form that describes all time, and events which are universally true: *the sun also rises*.

So, for the telling of stories about the creation, the simple present proved a perfect vehicle.

The Level 2 collection of stories, *The Twin Chariot*, starts with the following introduction – both to universal stories and to the present simple.

The moon becomes bigger and then smaller. The sun is sometimes weak, sometimes strong. The sun travels across the sky, and usually when it finishes the journey, the moon takes its place.

Because of this continuous journey, many peoples see the sun as a traveller.

The sun and moon are both travellers of the sky. To most peoples, they are relations: brother and sister, husband and wife. One story explains the journey of the sun in this way: that all day the sun travels to visit the moon. Their meeting is always very short. So always the sun must continue its journey.

(Spiro 1990b: 3 -4 **Please see Appendix Reading 3 for the complete introduction**)

Through the present simple, I am permitted to introduce figurative language, restricted to concrete nouns which supply me with all the images I need.

The moon is like a mirror of life on earth. People see themselves in the moon. They see a human face. They see a person who changes like they do. Stories tell us this in two ways.

Firstly, they tell us that the moon itself is a person. The moon is the wife or sister of the sun. For the Barotse, the moon is Nasilele, wife of the Maker Nyambi. For the Greeks and Romans the moon was a young girl, Diana or Artemis. -----

Secondly, they tell us that a person lives on the moon. --- The British tell of a man who carried sticks on Sunday. Sunday was a day of rest; no-one should work on a Sunday. ----- The people of Tahiti tell of a woman called Hina. She used to beat flour at night. -----The aborigines of Australia tell us of two men. They had a terrible fight and both died. ----- The story in this book is from China. It tells us about a woman who escapes her angry husband. She hides in the moon.

(Spiro 1990b: 6 – 7 and **Appendix Reading 3**)

Through the present simple, it is also possible to suggest the currency of ideas for the reader.

Grammatically, the form suggests both all time, and current time. To carry that through philosophically, it is a vehicle for the universality of questioning, searching for answers and responding to mystery. Whilst all cultures do this, and continue to do so, their answers are remarkable both for the shared themes, and for the specificity of the differences; for example, the Greek moon goddess Diana is chaste and a huntress, other moon goddesses are loving wives, or fickle wives, or lovelorn wives: yet interestingly, most are female.

People, gods and emus talking

Concerns were mentioned above that ‘simplified language’ could be “contrived” (Hedge 2000) or just simply “dull” (Brumfit in Day and Bamford 1998). More serious even than strained and dull *written* texts, were those which purported to mimic natural conversation. Textbook dialogues, in their worst incarnation, were no more than a parody of how ‘real’ people actually spoke. For me, it was an important challenge to make the dialogue of these stories alive and meaningful whilst still linguistically controlled.

In the creation story of the Joshua tribe described above, I illustrate the dialogue between two archetypal characters – Xowalaci the Maker, and the First Man. In their case, there is a runic simplicity about their words, each one measured and careful as befits their roles in the creation story. An aboriginal creation story tells of two emus who have a fight at night, before daylight had come to earth. One emu throws her egg up into the sky. It explodes and the yolk spreads across the sky and becomes daylight. This interesting scenario offered scope for another kind of dialogue: a squabble between two mother emus. I became fascinated to imagine what it was the emus had fought about, and turned them into two Jewish mothers boasting about their children.

Two birds sat on their eggs in the midday moon. They had long tails like brushes. They had combs standing high and bright on their heads. The day was dark as usual.

“Rather dark, as usual,” said the bird with the long legs.

“Yes. Dark for the time of year,” said the other.

The wind moved in the trees. They could hear the cry of laughing birds, of animals running in the grass. But they could see only dark.

“How many eggs is it this time?” said the first bird, Emu.

“Three, this time,” said Brolga, the second bird. “They were big this time. Not like my last two. They were easy eggs.”

“Oh, my two eggs were very easy last time,” said Emu. “Lovely chicks they were. So hungry, so strong. In no time, they were away, finding their own food.”

“My two chicks found their own food after three days,” said Brolga proudly.

“With mine, it was after two days,” said Emu. She pulled herself up tall. Her throat stood high, like a tower. Her wings opened wide over the eggs.

“My two chicks are so clever, “ said Emu. “They understand sounds in the trees better than I do,”

“Mine know the language of every bird that flies,” said Brolga.

“Well, at least your chicks are clever, because they aren’t very beautiful, “ said Emu.

“Well, your chicks are so strange, with their terrible long throats and long legs. It must be a worry for you, poor dear.”

Spiro 1990b: 10 – 12 See Appendix Reading 3

The argument continues in this vein, with the emu eggs on which they are sitting becoming hotter and hotter, until one of the emus, in fury lifts one round brown egg in her long foot and shouts: “*Take this, Emu! See if your chicks are better than mine!*” and throws the egg into the sky.

It was a great delight, in this sequence, to echo the idioms and phraseology of everyday language: the ‘phatic’ exchanges about the weather – “*Rather dull/wet/sunny for the time of year!*” becomes the myth-specific “*Rather dark, as usual*”, “*Dark for the time of year*”. In the same way as the English are stoically resigned to it always being dull for the time of year, so are the emus resigned to the midday darkness of their pre-creation world.

Joining and transforming

This section began by asking: *How does such a project transform into something that is ‘authentic’ in the way stated above, and central to my core values?*

I have aimed to show that the process of joining ‘the universal story’ and the idea of a ‘runic’ language that begins to evolve its own rules, transformed this project into something that was authentic in several senses.

Firstly it was authentic to the notion of language with “communicative intent” – designed for its readers and thus “appropriately simple in language and concept.” (Day and Bamford 1998: 61).

Secondly, it was authentic to my search for a poetic voice, in that it explored stories central to my core belief of **connectivity**: in this case, the connection between cultures and their questions and interpretations of the world. It also allowed me, through this, to experiment with language – to echo natural conversation, to play with characterization, to sharpen

language through simplification processes, so that ‘voice’ connected with my intended meanings.

Thirdly, it was authentic to the value I attach to *knowledge transformation*, in that my researched knowledge was newly shaped into character, settings, language and events that gave them narrative and philosophical life.

5.3 Finding the heart in themes: *Travelling Light* and *The Man*

Upstairs

The section above described a project in which language guidelines were prescribed, but subject/content was unrestricted. This second project, with English Language International (2003 – 2004) was the reverse. The writer was invited to modify language ‘intuitively’, whilst the theme was broadly defined and certain restrictions placed on plot development.

2002 English Language International series:

- no sub-plots, and at the earlier levels no more than three main characters.
- The stories had to be set in the present day with a linear timescale; there were to be no flashbacks or ‘flash-forwards’.

Dual selves and *Travelling Light*

The broad theme was ‘a story about London’, for the first collection of three commissioned stories, *London Tales* (Spiro 2003). Within this broad remit, I began to search for my core characters and their situation, *something that mattered*, as a starting point for *making something new*. I started with my own feelings about London. Having been born, grown up, and gone to school and University in London, I had mixed feelings. It was a city that could become a whole world, and a city one needed to escape in case it should do so. It was a city that made one both insular and cosmopolitan, and one I needed to move away from physically as well as metaphysically in order to become a ‘citizen of the world’ and find my own place. Through this duality I arrived at the story of two main characters: George Trubshaw, who had always lived in the same suburb of London, married his first girlfriend, and ran a taxi business around the streets where he grew up; and his long-lost schoolfriend, Len Eccles, who had left school early and become a long-distance truck driver, travelling round the world, never settling in one place, but carrying his world

in the back of his truck. They bump into one another unexpectedly, on one of Len's deliveries in London.

(The section that follows is the text of an email interview between myself and the editor, published alongside the story: Spiro 2003: 80 - 83. **See Appendix Reading 7 for full text of interview, activities and story**).

What inspired you to write this story?

There were several sources of inspiration for this story. The first was the experience of moving house, which I have done many times. Each time, a removals man has come in, brisk and unemotional, and emptied out the house. I would often wonder what he thought, seeing where I was going from and where to the other end. It seemed to be one of those jobs, like an estate agent or a lawyer, where you are meeting people on the cusp of change. I've often thought what a rich source of stories they must be: for every journey they make: who is moving, and why? Where to, and where from?.

Another source of inspiration for the story were holidays I had in my early twenties, hitch-hiking around Europe and driving in a van right through to Istanbul. It made me aware of the magic of the road, the late-night and early-morning hours when you have a single purpose, to reach a destination: and yet the road itself is quite hypnotic, and seems to be almost an alternative universe.

Another source of inspiration for the story, was a school reunion, about ten years after we all left school. What amazed me about that reunion, was how instantly and intensely the old feelings were evoked; the girls (it was an all-girls school), who made me feel second-rate and dowdy, still made me feel that. The girls who had a brightness and excitement about them, still did. Just the same feelings of envy and inferiority were there, even though now I have fulfilled many of my dreams and am very happy with my choice of lifestyle. This too made me think about the time warps of our emotions: that something quite unexpected can catapult our feelings right back in time, to a state we thought was long forgotten.

Have you, yourself, travelled much?

Yes, the student holidays gave me a taste for travel that I have never recovered from. After exploring Europe on no money, always on the edge of everyday life there,

staying in hostels and meeting other travellers, I became determined to travel for a purpose, and in a way that allowed me to meet local people, enter their homes and understand their language. Since then, the profession of English language teaching has taken me to five continents, including Mexico, Kenya and Egypt, India and Sri Lanka and Japan. It has also given me the opportunity to live and work in parts of Europe that had been unknown to me, such as Hungary, Poland, Romania, Czech Republic and Russia. I have spent days on the road, just like Len in the story. In 1991 I packed up all my household and drove from Nottingham to southern Hungary, all night along the frighteningly fast German motorways, and narrow potholed Hungarian back streets. For years, too, I had a fascination with India, and worked and travelled wherever I could go safely, from Tamil Nadu in the tip, to the foothills of the Himalayas. I have been to most of the places Len talks about, and share with him the sense of privilege at being there.

Which of the two main characters do you most identify with?

The two men, George and Len, are both aspects of myself. In fact, in developing the story, I was really exploring this dilemma in myself: between the pleasure of having a home, and the urge to explore and be an adventurer. Always, choosing one and not the other is a sacrifice: having a home is the most marvellous sense of calm and rootedness. I have understood only recently what it is like to plant roses, and see them grow from a sprig and wind themselves around the trellis. And yet that means giving up the idea of ‘travelling light’: being able to just uproot and go. And of course the reverse is true: the eternal traveller will never see the sprigs growing into yellow roses.

This is also true of the people around you. For years while I was travelling I was developing friendships that were pulled apart, that came and went. Here you are in a world where no-one has known you more than about five minutes. That’s exciting, in a way, because you can always reinvent yourself, like Len does. But George is really telling the opposite story: just how deeply nourishing it is to be with people with whom you have a past, and people who won’t just disappear.

George and Len are of course, extreme examples of each case, and I think my own resolution has been to be a little bit of both George and Len most of the time and as far as that’s physically possible!

You've recently published a novel. What do you think is the main difference in writing a short story and a novel?

This short story might be one episode in a novel. The key drive I had in writing the novel was the overall drive of the characters: and the characters in turn drove the plot. I wanted to show, not only how a character changed over time, but how two characters in two different times, mirrored and echoed one another. This entailed a whole cluster of episodes, insights, interactions. The short story in a way telescopes all these together. One episode serves to do everything – to reveal character, to demonstrate change – even tiny and subtle change, and to say something about characters echoing and mirroring one another. I suppose short story is like a haiku: it reveals a subtle moment of change, which may be symbolic of something bigger – but in itself is delicate, almost imperceptible: whilst the novel is an epic – the moment of change is contextualised. You show all the hundred and one factors which led up to it, and which lead away from it.

The story starts with Len's journey in his truck into London, on a routine delivery job.

4.30 in November and the lights are on in London.
It had grown darker and darker as Len travelled north through Europe. Crete was all white rooftops and the smell of crushed figs. Hungary was dark red, with cherry trees and ripe vines. Then the grey and silver of German motorways. On the German motorways you moved fast, acted fast, and the rain was silver.
Now in November there was England and sky like mud, and he was stuck. The London cars were going nowhere.
"London. November. What can you expect?" he thought. He wasn't irritated in Crete when the police searched every inch of his lorry. He wasn't irritated in Hungary when another lorry pushed him off the road. But in London he was irritated because this is where he was born. If you are born somewhere you expect it to behave. And London didn't. It was muddy and dark and crowded and confusing, and it made him angry.

(Spiro 2003: 84. Original version before edits)

He gradually focuses on his surroundings enough to realise he is going back into the streets where he grew up, and then, inexorably, past his school, the garage his father had run, and the café where he had spent most evenings in his childhood. Curious, he pulls in to the garage, and walks back into the café - the same except that it has

changed its name from *Smokey Joe* to *Saucy Sally*. As he sits at a table, the door opens and a man comes in. The man

had a kind, slightly creased face with marks round the eyes that made him look as if he was permanently smiling, and his hair was thick and black as a horse's tail. Amazing, if he hadn't known George would be nearly forty now, it could almost have been George. But this man looked almost ten years younger.

George Trubshaw sat in Saucy Sally's in his usual place. There was a man at the opposite table, with a face that looked as if all the dust and diesel of the world had worked its way into the creases. There were purple bags of exhaustion under each eye, and his hair was folded over his forehead in grey stripes. Amazing, if he hadn't known Len would be nearly forty now, it could almost have been Len Eccles. But this man looked almost ten years older.

(Spiro 2003: 95).

The story leads up to the final, subtle turning point. Both characters have changed, slightly destabilised, slightly envious of the ‘other’ they could have been:

Len wound back through the tunnel that had lead him here the night before, back onto the North Circular. He was in good time to drop off his load in Watford. Then he was on to pick up the next load, in Middlesbrough. He knew a motel there where he could stay for the night. But now it sent cold chills around his heart, thinking of it. Thinking of it --- yes, compared to last night's bedroom. With the child's stringy blanket and the Mickey Mouse bed cover. With the smell of toast in the pine kitchen, With Sal who he had known with long brown plaits. And with George who liked baked beans after all. George who had stood beside him for the school photo. When he was with them, his dad came alive again. They knew more about his dad than he did. And then he remembered that troubled look they had given him. Why should they look at him like that? How could they even begin to know the excitement of the road, of the unknown, of travelling light?

I've been all round the world, and what's he done? Nothing! Just run cabs up and down the high street. I've loved a woman with black eyes from the Black Sea, and another from the Spanish Steps. But what about him? Just the first girl he saw!

And yet...

* * *

George Trubshaw was on the way to the doctor's with the neighbour. The cab and the neighbour and the High Street didn't feel the same. He didn't feel pleased to see them, as usual. The shops looked tatty and cheap, the neighbour's chatter seemed tedious and provincial. The slow morning traffic pushed him on automatic round the one

way system, and sent cold chills round his heart, just a little. Thinking of it.... yes, compared to Len Eccles. The pyramids, the Blue Mosque, the Arizona Desert, the Black Sea, Table Mountain. The nearest George had ever come to these, was the window of the travel agency in Brent High Street. But I've got Sal and the kids, all three of them beautiful, and my parents still strong and in good health. I've done very well for myself. My home is nice, my marriage is happy. And yet ...

George Trubshaw held tight to his steering wheel. 'Maybe I should try long-distance cab driving? Just for a change...' he said to himself.

Len held tight to his steering wheel. 'I suppose this is what being homesick feels like,' he said to himself.

(Spiro 2003: 108)

The inner and the outer reader: working with an editor

The chart below traces the process of close collaboration with an editor. The example is the opening paragraph of the story, but forms a snapshot of the process which took place line by line, paragraph by paragraph throughout the story.

Italics: editor's comments

Underlined text: editor's suggested rewriting

Original Version	Editorial comment
4.30 in November and the lights are on in London.	4.30 in November and the lights are on in London.
It had grown darker and darker as Len travelled north through Europe. Crete was all white rooftops and the smell of crushed figs. Hungary was dark red, with cherry trees and ripe vines. Then the grey and silver of German motorways.	<i>2 things here – odd to start with a number and it could be 4.30 in the morning...how about:</i> <u>An afternoon in November: 4.30 and the lights are on in London.</u>
On the German motorways you moved fast, acted fast, and the rain was silver.	Or: <u>Four thirty on a November afternoon, and in London the lights are already on.</u> On the German motorways you moved fast, acted fast, and the rain was silver. <i>We really like the silver rain and think you should mirror it below</i>
Now in November there was England and sky like mud, and	Now in November <u>there</u> it was England and sky like mud, and he was

<p>he was stuck. The London cars were going nowhere.</p> <p>“London. November. What can you expect?” he thought.</p> <p>He wasn’t irritated in Crete when the police searched every inch of his lorry. He wasn’t irritated in Hungary when another lorry pushed him off the road. But in London he was irritated because this is where he was born. If you are born somewhere you expect it to behave.</p> <p>And London didn’t. It was muddy and dark and crowded and confusing, and it made him angry.</p> <p>‘Glad I left,’ he thought. ‘Glad I’m on the move.’</p>	<p>stuck. The London cars were going nowhere.</p> <p><i>Why just cars? Why not: <u>The London traffic was...</u></i></p> <p>‘London. November. What can you expect?’ he thought.</p> <p><i>This doesn’t sound like an expression of irritation. And you’ve already said twice it was London and November, so you don’t need to repeat it here. But you need him to show his irritation.</i></p> <p>He wasn’t irritated in Crete when the police searched every inch of his lorry. He wasn’t irritated in Hungary when another lorry pushed him off the road. But in London he was irritated because this is where he was born. If you are born somewhere you expect it to behave.</p> <p><i>We can see what you’re trying to say here but it sounds a bit odd. You can’t say “if you are born somewhere” ...because you have to be born somewhere. How about something along the lines of: <u>Somehow you expect the place where you’re born to be well-behaved. And London wasn’t.</u></i></p> <p>And London didn’t. It was muddy and dark <i>This is where you could mirror the silver rain. And London is rarely muddy, it’s wet and cold and it isn’t dark because the lights are on, as you’ve said. and crowded and confusing, to an old Londoner it shouldn’t be that confusing, not if he’s experienced in navigating foreign cities...and it made him angry. Think more about why he’s angry. Is it the change perhaps from what he remembers – expectations...?</i></p> <p>‘Glad I left,’ he thought. ‘Glad I’m <u>always</u> on the move.’</p>
Final version	
<p><i>An afternoon in November: 4.30 and the lights are on in London.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p>It had grown darker and darker as Len travelled north through Europe. Crete was all white rooftops and the smell of crushed figs. Hungary was dark red, with cherry trees and ripe vines. Then the grey and silver of German motorways. On the German motorways you moved fast, acted fast, and the rain was silver....</p>	

Now in November it was England and sky like mud, and he was stuck. The London traffic was going nowhere. Rain, smudging under the windscreen wipers: smudging the windscreen brown.

“Only London rain is this colour,” Len thought. “Dirtiest rain in Europe.”
 He wasn’t irritated in Crete when the police searched every inch of his lorry. He wasn’t irritated in Hungary when another lorry pushed him off the road. But in London he was irritated because this is where he was born. *Somehow you expect the place where you’re born to be well-behaved. And London wasn’t. It was messy. Perfectly nice streets had developed road bumps and bollards that narrowed them. Roads you could once go up and down had changed direction and developed No Entry signs. When you needed a garage there were only furniture warehouses: when you needed a layby, there were only expensive car parks or Park and Ride bus yards.*
 ‘Glad I left,’ he thought. ‘Glad I’m always on the move.’

Table 2: The editing process: from first to published version (Spiro 2003)

Italicised sections in the final paragraph represent changes from the first version, as a result of editorial comment.

In other words, my own ‘inner reader’ was being checked and monitored by an ‘outer reader’. The main changes suggested involved:

- ***Making language and the feelings behind them congruent:*** does Len’s first utterance really sound like irritation? To an ‘other’ reader, it did not.
- ***Unpacking assumptions about mood and meaning:*** why was London more irritating than other cities? Why was the rain and the traffic more irritating? From my knowledge of London, I knew the answer: but my reader did not.
- ***Resolving ambiguities:*** 4.30 could be either in the morning or in the evening, with very different connotations to darkness at each time. I am clear about which one this is, but why should my reader be?
- ***Being accurate:*** is London rain really muddy? Of course, on reflection I acknowledged I had only included this for poetic effect. Riverbanks and parks might be muddy, but not the London streets.
- ***Being consistent:*** I wanted the lights to be on, and I also wanted it to be dark. To make sense of this I needed to make a clear choice, or to explain what I meant. I resolved this with the phrase “the sky like mud”.
- ***Use language precisely and responsibly.*** The editors pointed out odd phrasing such as “if you are born somewhere you like it to behave”, which I had rather liked on first conception. Of course, on rereading I accepted the editor’s caution to say what I mean, and this became: *Somehow you expect the place where you’re born to be well-behaved.*

The editing process, then, became my training ground for more finely tuned modification for audience. I came to appreciate that the process of honing text needed to be precise and conscious of its audience at every level. Relying on a broad, unschooled intuition would not work. This was rather the ‘intuition’ of a precisely tuned thousand-part instrument, and the evaluation of its effectiveness needed to take place on a word for word, idea by idea basis.

The Man Upstairs: finding the central message

With this newly tuned ‘intuition’ I moved in 2004 to the second commissioned story, This was to write a story for the title *A Twist in the Tale* – a story with an unexpected ending. In my ‘story notebook’ I had several ideas which had natural ‘twists’. My ‘story notebook’ is a record of anecdotes picked up from the newspaper, from friends, from life experience: short ‘sketches’ that seem to have an interesting natural story shape to them, that have the potential to grow, to ‘expand one’s humanity’ in some way. *Travelling Light* began partly as an anecdote in this way – a conversation between a friend and a truck driver in a roadside cafe. Parts of my novel began, too as anecdotes: driving home with a stuffed boar’s head in the back seat became the comic opening of *Nothing I Touch Stands Still*. Sometimes, the anecdote would fictionalise itself in between the telling/overhearing and the writing down, but often this process would not happen until the anecdote ‘became’ story.

The following three were the ones which might fit my new commission.

- an old lady is sitting quietly in the corner of a party arranged for a new and young prizewinning writer/film star, who has portrayed the life of a woman explorer. She is being entirely ignored, while the buzz of excitement and flashing lights carries on around the glamorous celebrity. Yet the old lady *is* the woman explorer.
- A film crew come to a seaside town to do a documentary about holiday resorts in and out of season. While they are there, the young female journalist begins to notice that she is being followed. It doesn’t worry her at first, but then she starts receiving notes begging for a meeting, strange phone messages, and then small gifts appear for her. The crew suggest it is a local who has fallen in love with her, and advise her to confront the stalker. One day after work, with the cameraman following her at a distance as a support, she manages to trap the stalker. It isn’t a man at all, but a young girl who has identified with the journalist, longs like her to travel and become part of the big media world, is

desperately bored with her seaside town, has become anorexic in her desire to look like a film star. The journalist talks to her about what the media world is really like, and admits that her own job is a six month contract and as soon as the film is made, she will be on the dole.

- a foreign visitor stays in an English village. After he arrives, there is a series of crimes. Everyone in the village assumes it must be the foreign visitor and he is ostracised. Eventually, his stay ends and he leaves the village: yet the crimes continue. It is discovered they were all committed by someone local.

All these stories had twists which interested me, because they involved the process of ‘learning’, seeing beyond surfaces, deconstructing and questioning the apparent. They also seemed to share something about prejudice, media hype, the culture of celebrity and celebrity-worship. Any one of them might ‘work’. However, when focusing on each one in turn, none of them seemed to me in the end to have something I could carry forward passionately. Instead, they began to converge with one another into something both edgier and subtler than any of the three:

- What if the celebrity was the foreign visitor, despised and accused of crimes? In fact, what if the celebrity was the one accused of stalking?
- Taking it even further, what if it was the processes of being an artist itself, which made the celebrity appear to be a criminal? Wouldn’t this show just how obsessed media is with the surfaces and outcomes of fame, rather than with the processes? Yes- we hear and read about the diets and love affairs of great actresses, but nothing about the stages, struggles, learning strategies and life lessons in becoming a great actress. Could this story, then, be the place where I defend the artist’s struggle against a surface-obsessed world?

Now I had a central message that I cared about, and because of this, a story I knew I could ‘grow’ with a sense of my authentic self at the centre.

The English landlady is suspicious of her foreign visitor from the very first contact.

Gloria opened the letter with the foreign postmark. It was written in careful handwriting, with letters joined from the top so they looked like sparrows hanging off a tree.

Dear Mrs. Carlyle,

I am writing to you about the rooms which you have advertised.

These rooms seem to me perfect for my needs. I have private work I must do and for this I will need peace and quiet. I am sure in your village, and in your quiet street, this will be possible.

My wish is to stay for 3 months from 1st June, and I am able to pay the rent in full in advance.

Please contact me at the above address, to confirm the arrangement.

I will be very pleased to meet you and am

Yours truly, Zoltan Veraly

It was not Gloria's business to know what his work was, and she supposed it was fair enough that he wanted peace and quiet. As long as he paid the rent, it didn't matter what he was doing with his peace and quiet.

(Spiro 2004: 46. See **Appendix Reading 8 for complete text**).

The man does very little when he actually arrives in the village. All he does is stay quietly in his room, hardly appearing at all during the day. Yet this quiet is deeply disturbing to the surrounding community: they cannot equate it with anything in their experience, apart from the sinister and the suspicious. Whilst 'the man' spends his time silently writing, the mythology around him grows into hysteria.

Gloria felt funny, working in the post office all day, hearing someone moving about upstairs. But it felt even funnier, when she could not hear him moving about upstairs. Sometimes, there was no movement or sound upstairs for hours on end. What on earth could he be doing?

"We don't see much of your lodger about town," Flora said to her as she picked up her pension.

"Yea, he keeps himself busy. "

"Oh yes, doing what? What's he busy doing?"

"Goodness knows. It goes quiet up there for hours at a time."

"What could he be up to? What is there to be up to down here, anyway?" Flora replied disgustedly.

"Oh, you know..." Gloria said. "Though I sometimes wonder..."

"Sounds like he's the quiet type. They're the ones to watch, you know, the quiet types."

“Yeah, he’s a quiet type all right.”

“Well often they’re quiet because they have something to hide!”
Flora whispered.

She leaned forward and hissed, “I hope you’re keeping Tilla and Ellie out of his way. You never can be too sure, you know.”

Ellie noticed two strange things about Mr Veraly. Firstly, she never saw him go shopping. What exactly did he live on in there? He was there for a whole week, and neither Tilla, nor Ellie, nor Gloria saw him with so much as a pint of milk. The second strange thing was that sometimes Ellie saw him coming *in* early in the morning as they went to school, but she never saw him going *out*. It did not seem possible to arrive without leaving in the first place.

Ellie told the other girls at school.

“He doesn’t eat.”

“Don’t be daft, everyone eats.”

“I don’t think he does. He never goes shopping.”

“Maybe, you know, he eats other things,” said Ellie’s friend Georgia, who read lots of books. Georgia tapped her nose, as if she knew some secret but she wasn’t telling.

“What d’you mean, he eats other things?” Ellie asked, alarmed. Georgia knew a lot, because she read grown up books.

“Well, maybe he gets his food ...at night! You know...” Georgia said, mysteriously.

Ellie’s eyes grew huge and frightened.

“What do you mean, at night!” she almost shouted, because it was true – if he came in early in the morning – well maybe he was... going out at night to get his food!

“Well, where did you say he was from?”

“Mum said somewhere east. Rumminia or Hungry.”

“Oh yeah? Well, guess who comes from those places?”

“Well who? Who do you mean?”

Ellie was in a panic. She could feel the sweat on her forehead, and she shivered, though she had no idea what Georgia was talking

about. Georgia leaned forward, and whispered loudly right into her ear, “Dracula!” (Spiro 2004: 54 - 56. **See Appendix Reading 8 for the complete story**)

Here is the final scene of the story. By this time, the foreign visitor has been thoroughly demonized. He has been blamed for the disappearance of the landlady’s daughter, accused of stalking and voyeurism, and suspected of murdering a lady whose gentle voice had been heard daily through the wall. Meanwhile, he has in fact continued to do very little apart from write and go for early morning walks.

“Zoltan Veraly” the reporter was saying, except she pronounced it ‘Veraí’, “has been called the greatest poet and visionary of his generation. He has today been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, and is currently living in Bergers Hill. And he is on the line.” She smiled

“How do you like rural England?”

“It is not quite as I expected,” said Zoltan’s voice, “and I miss my home and fellow poets. The voice of Akhmatova reading her poetry on tape has been my best friend--“

Gloria listened, stood in the hallway watching, caught between the strange inside world, the even stranger outside one. The reporter was waiting.

“Were you aware, at all, Mrs Carlyle, that you were living next door to a literary star?”

He paused and, at that moment the cameras turned to the red front door with GO HOME PERVERT sprayed in tall yellow letters. The front door opened and there was Zoltan Veraly. He looked very tall in the bright beams from the TV vans, very quiet in the cacophony of microphones and loudspeakers. As the lights flashed around him, he blinked a little, then brushed past them – all of them: Jake, Ellie, Gloria, Flora, the banners and broken glass and daubed doorway, the clamour of journalists, microphones and cameras.

“Mr Veraly”----- the journalists began,

“How do you feel -----“

But Mr. Veraly just tipped the brim of his hat to shade his eyes, leaned forward and said to the millions of viewers,

“I am going for my early morning walk”

Then he walked past as if they were not there. (Spiro 2004: 71 - 72)

Zoltan Veraly was no specific writer, for me, but simply the archetypal artist in an unsympathetic world; a writer who, like the Turkish Nobel Prizewinner Pamuk, “shuts himself up in a room for years on end” in order to hone his craft (Pamuk 2006: 17).

At a recent talk, a member of the audience asked: “Is this the way you have behaved, in

similar situations of being misunderstood?” This is how I remember answering: “The way my character behaves in this story is aspirational. It is a message to myself and others, about how one might survive revilement and misunderstanding. In a way, this character retains a central core of self-esteem that they simply cannot touch. They are simply too small for him. I would love to feel this at times of being tested, and those I most admire have certainly demonstrated this kind of behaviour, whatever they have felt inside.” (Tammi Conference, Helsinki, Finland: November 2004)

5.4 Authenticity, transformation and finding a voice

The stories described above all sprang out of the discipline of ‘house style’, publishers’ guidelines and editorial intervention; and yet they represent the ‘heart’ of themes that ‘mattered’ to me; the connection between cultures, the acknowledging of paradox and duality in oneself (Len and George), the isolation of the artist, the hysteria of the media, the honouring of the artistic process (Zoltan Veraly). In finding this ‘heart’ I remained true to my own principles and values as a writer, whilst learning to write with a more finely tuned voice. I also acted as a *creative* writer within my own understandings of what this meant: transforming knowledge-as-experience into something new, a belief in the value of what I am doing, a continued tuning of my message for audience, and a dedication to the process of perpetual self-improvement (Section 3.3 of this dissertation). The process of writing with these constraints represented genuine learning for me. I learnt what really responsible ‘intuitive’ modification meant. I learnt how my writing might read to an outsider on a word for word basis. I also learnt the importance of ‘triangulating’ the voice of the inner reader with other evidence, other reader response, to check the real impact of text. Writing under strict commission thus emerged, unexpectedly, as research into self, into language, and into the writing process; it became a process of professionalisation.

The next chapter continues with these two new dimensions to writing: writing as a response to constraint, and writing as a process of ‘professionalisation’.

Chapter Six

Writing for performance: speaking out

Connection

I strongly believe in the notion of the global citizen who is not defined by nationality or religion, and who does not define others in this way.

Empathy

- *I am energised through interaction and empathy with others, and this interaction is a major source of learning.*
- *It is also my belief that this empathy only makes sense through transformation in the real and material world: and that we fulfil this, in a way that is unique and specific to our abilities, skills and beliefs.*

Chapters Four and Five looked at how I as writer transformed lived and created story into the written word, while searching for my own ‘voice’ and for ways of revealing core values. Chapter Five also ended with two observations arising from ‘commissioned writing’: the experience of writing as a process of response to constraint, and of writing as a process of developing new skills in order to adapt to the ‘outer reader’ rather than the inner, intuitive one - the process of professionalisation and adaptation.

This chapter continues to address the implications of ‘commissioned’ creativity through the medium of performance on screen/stage. The chapter describes two projects involving performance; the first, my experience as producer of Jewish and interfaith programmes for Carlton/West Country television, and the second - two plays, commissioned to accompany the Jews of Devon and Cornwall Exhibition, Plymouth Museum, February 2001. I will explore how initial concepts were translated into performance with different kinds of constraint: technical, aesthetic and physical. In so doing, I will show how core values are revealed through action and enhanced through ‘lived’ and living research: and how **knowledge** studied, heard and overheard is transformed into belief, performance and production.

6. 1 From research to quintessential moments: two minutes as essence

Between 1999 - 2001 I was asked to run my own series of 2 minute short programmes that were part of the spiritual ‘slot’ on Carlton/West Country TV. The invitation was to explore any aspect of the Jewish faith. Up to that moment, the religion had barely been represented on these ‘slots’, having focused almost exclusively on the Anglican and occasionally Catholic communities of the West Country. Occasional programmes related to Jewish issues had been presented by seniors of their communities such as vicars and priests, and the focus had been on the formal and organised manifestations of their religions: whereas I was permitted to choose any angle I wanted, and to consider ‘religions’ from the ground upwards, as lived by my community.

Programme 1: The Jewish Life Cycle

I chose the Jewish Life Cycle as the topic for the first series, formulating questions which explored how organised religion intersected with personal experience: what are the rituals that mark the stages of life, such as birth, marriage and death, and how have these affected the lives of members of the Jewish community? Have these rituals been a support and solace, or a straitjacket and constraint? Do men and women experience these rituals differently?

I sought answers to these questions through several different research modes:

- Conversations with members of my community in Totnes about their lives and responses to my key question: how had Judaism and spirituality offered support/solace or insight during the different stages and rites of passage in their own lives?
- Library research in order to understand the background and origins of rituals in the Jewish life cycle. This included knowledge traditionally forbidden - such as the Kabbalah (Halevi 1986); early laws such as the 11th century writer Maimonides; parables and stories by rabbis and commentators from the first century and earlier (Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues 1995); values (Jacobs reprint 1983) festivals (Heschel 1951) and food (Roden 1999).
- Conversations with members of the Jewish community who could offer informed insights into my questions: a north London rabbi David Hulbert, a

Jewish educator, Fiona Hulbert, and a Jewish community co-ordinator Thena Kendall. For them, I formulated specific questions about birth, marriage, death and daily ritual, and was directed to both further reading and to anecdotes and insights from their own lives.

Through these routes, I developed a rich landscape of information about the different phases of life, deeply revealing of the core values at the heart of Judaic culture. The challenge of my commission was to distil this into two minute ‘snapshots’ in which some essential or symbolic quality could be conveyed. The section below will offer a snapshot of this process: some of the knowledge gained through the different avenues of learning, and the selections made in order to turn these into 2-minute distillations in a visual medium.

1: Birth –

Learning from life and library

Naming the child is a sacred ritual. “To know the name is to know the essence of a thing” (Genesis). In Hebrew, the word *davar* - a thing, is the same as the word *daber* - to speak. These are formed with the same three consonants: d, v/b. r. So, every Hebrew name has a meaning:

Esther: a star

Shoshana: rose

Nathan: to give

Chayim: life

Jonah: dove (Gersh 1986; Schauss 1950).

There are intriguing superstitions such as: “if you step over a child it will stop growing: to make it resume growing, recross it.” (Feldman 1927: 196).

There is also a description in the Talmud that is startlingly akin to Platonic ideas of the reincarnation of babies from previous lives. The Talmudic story goes that, when a baby is about to be born, a light is held behind its head so that it can see all over the world. But at the instant of birth, an angel touches its mouth and it forgets everything. So all of life is spent remembering what we once knew (Birnbaum: 1964).

Two minutes as essence

For the two minutes, I chose to focus on lullaby as a coded way of describing the dangers of pogrom life and blessing the child with a safe and happy life. I invited

Amy, a singer in the Totnes community, to talk about and sing her favourite Yiddish lullaby by Mordecai Gebirtig, a Polish songwriter from Krakow whose songs inspired the Jewish resistance movement during World War 2. She sang her own translation, and showed how the words describe in coded form the fears of the mother for the future.

*So sleep, my clever handsome bridegroom
and whilst you lie in your cradle by my side
you will still cost me many mother's tears
until a man grows out of you with pride.*

(Gebirtig *Schlaf mein Yankele* translated by Amy Lee for Jewish Life Cycle programme, February 1998)

2: Marriage

Learning from life and library

Marriage in all the Scriptures emerges as a sacred duty, and sexual pleasure in marriage as divinely blessed.

A Roman lady once asked the rabbi how long it took to create the universe.

"Six days" the rabbi said.

"And what has your God been doing since then?"

"Arranging marriages".

"Arranging marriages isn't so hard," the lady said, "I can arrange marriages in a moment."

She called for 1000 female slaves and 1000 male slaves, lined them up opposite each other and said,

"You are now married."

The next day the slaves appeared, one with a cracked lip, another with a cracked head, a third with a broken nose.

"What happened?" the lady said.

"I don't want him! I can't stand her! I can't bear the sight of him! I can't live another day under the same roof as her!" they cried.

The lady went back to the rabbi and said,

"Truly making marriage is God's most wondrous miracle."

(Talmudic story from Rabbi Yose: recounted by myself)

Early writings are clear that marriage is not sustained by airy romance, but by substantial and well-grounded attention to the details of daily living. Maimonides, in the 11th century, listed the obligations of the husband to provide the wife:

clothes to the amount of 50 zuz per annum, given in the rainy season so it is the dry season by the time they are worn out
a girdle for her loins

a cap for her head
shoes each High Holy Day
coloured fabrics to wind round her head
eye-paint and rouge
a silver coin every week for the laundry and bath-house

(Maimonides in Rabinowitz 1961)

The canopy is a traditional symbol for joining, or bringing into the family. The word ‘chupa’ to describe the marriage canopy, also means ‘to cover with garlands’.

Examples of the canopy as symbol include:

“Your time was the time of love, and I spread my mantle over you” (Ezekiel 18:8)

“Spread thy cloak over thy handmaid, for thou art a kinsman.” (Ruth 3: 9) .

Two minutes as essence

The ketubah, or marriage licence, is a joyful symbol of marriage as part of nature. My two mentors, Fiona and David Hulbert, showed me their own ketubah, which Fiona had painted herself. Hers, as with other traditional ketubah, is a glorious illuminated manuscript, abundantly decorated with birds, vines, fruits, ceremonial breads, tiny sacred scrolls and striped prayer shawls. During the two minutes, I showed and talked about different decorated ketubah, and their significance in the story of marriage as a core of Jewish life.

3. Death

Learning from life and library

There are beautiful images in the scriptures helping the reader to come to terms with death as the culmination of a good life. One tells the story of two ships, one going out, the other coming in. The crowds are cheering the outgoing ship, but scarcely notice the one coming in. The wise man says:

‘ Rejoice not over the ship that is setting out to sea, for you know not what destiny awaits it, what stories it may encounter, what dangers it may have to undergo. Rejoice, rather, over the ship that has reached port safely and brought back all its passengers in peace. (Hertz: 310)

Most mystical of all is the prayer recited by the son on the death of his parent. The novelist of the Warsaw Ghetto, Leonid Kompert (1822- 1886), writes of this prayer, the kaddish:

The Kaddish: its origin is mysterious; angels are said to have brought it down from heaven and taught it to men. About this prayer the tenderest threads of

filial feeling and human recollection are entwined ----(Kompert cited in Hertz: 199)

----this prayer is a resurrection in the spirit of the perishable in man, because it does not acknowledge death, because it permits the blossom which, withered, has fallen from the tree of mankind to flower and develop again in the human heart (ibid: 100)

Two minutes as essence

For one member of the community, Alan, the experience of reciting this prayer supported him through the death of his mother, and led him (briefly) towards Judaism as a support and solace. I chose to focus on the Kaddish and his experience of it, in my two minute programme. For another member, Thena, the prohibition on women reciting the prayer turned her away from orthodox faith. Being forbidden to recite this prayer, although a committed Judaic scholar, and having to hand the task over to a male cousin, broke her connection with the orthodoxy and committed her to a more tolerant and embracing practice.

See Audio-Visual files 3. TV programmes Clip 1: Kaddish

Programme 2: 4 Jewish dishes: filmed in local kitchens

A second programme focused on another ‘grounded’ aspect of Jewish life which to me, shows how deeply the practical and the spiritual are intertwined in Judaism: food - its preparation, role in ritual and celebration, and role in family life. To facilitate this programme, I visited and talked to members of the community with different relationships to their mother’s traditional cooking: some had melded it with new spiritualities connected with the earth, Buddhism or planetary influences ; others had long forgotten the connection between the traditional recipes and the ceremonies they fitted into, yet retained a primal connection with the food itself.

See Audio-Visual files 3. TV programmes

Clip 2 Chicken soup

Clip 3: Chula

Programme 3: The Purim Story: filmed with children in the Totnes community

Another example of the ‘grounded’ quality of the Jewish life cycle is the importance of children at all sacred times in the calendar. The central Jewish festival, Passover, reserves the opening sequences for the youngest children in the group. Traditionally, the children ask their parents a sequence of questions about the Passover service; and the entire ceremony that follows is an elaborate answer to these questions.

For the third programme, I selected the festival most dedicated to children, Purim, in which children traditionally dress up as the characters of the Purim story. For this programme, I worked alongside a team of puppet-makers, to run a one-day puppet making workshop leading to a full puppet performance of the Purim story open to parents in the community. I talked to the children about what the story characters meant to them, how they had visually realised them in their puppets, and how they had internalised and interpreted the story in their own lives.

See Audio-Visual files 3. TV programmes

Clip 10: Purim story

Clip 11: Esther and Vashti

Clip 12: Mordecai and Haman

Clip 13: Puppet performance

It was not until the fourth series that West Country television (now Carlton) allowed me to pursue my real goal: to bring together different religions and show how the same questions are answered by each of them. In order to do this, it was an important aspect that others be empowered to share their core spiritual experiences. Those in the West Country community whom I felt had most to offer in terms of a unique and deep experience of spiritual reality, were also those most mistrustful of the television medium. It was thus part of my challenge, to impart to them the respectful and ‘allowing’ environment these programmes would offer; and also to convey the vision of a cross-cultural sharing, which could be facilitated by their participation. .

Programme 4: Days of Rest: Quaker, Jewish, Moslem and Buddhist days of rest

To set up this programme, I invited friends in the community from a range of different faiths, who I felt could talk to this with conviction. To reassure each of them that the

discussions would be respectful and empowering, I shared with them in detail the kind of questions we could ask, and the kind of issues that might be interesting. These were meant as a stimulus and support, rather than a constraint on anything they may wish to say: but the notes dealt with their predominant fear, that they would ‘run out of things to say’ or ‘dry up’. It also provided negotiation time to deselect those questions they were not happy to answer.

Letter to participants in the Days of Rest programmes

Each programme is 2 minutes 20 seconds long (but takes about 2 hours to shoot). The format would be something like this:

- A short introduction from me, linking the programme with the theme of the week
- A conversation between us, bringing out the key themes you would like to talk about + your own personal experiences and perspectives on special days/times for rest. Some suggested questions and topics are below. There will be others I have missed – so let me know which angles you would like brought out in the conversation.
- If you like, a short prayer, song or saying relevant to your time of rest
- A short closure from me, preparing for the next day’s programme or summing up.

Some suggested questions

1. It is clear that human beings need a time to recover from the stresses of everyday life, maybe reflect on them and gather strength: or just, perhaps, to reassert their faiths and beliefs. How is this done in your tradition? In your experience?
2. In your tradition, is there a time or day designated as ‘special’? How do you mark this special time?(for Richard and Moh Moh) If you designate your own times, how do you this? When, and where?
3. Is this time for reflection practised individually or communally – or both? What is the value and importance of each, for you? In the communal context is there, for example, the need for an intermediary or authority, such as a leader, a minister or an imam? How do you think the presence – or absence – of such a leader influences your way of praying?
4. In what ways is a ‘special’ time important for you personally? Does it help you on the other days/times of the week? If so, in what ways? (Glen –eg. How is physical rest and wellbeing connected with spiritual wellbeing? How can short periods of time devoted to ‘not-doing’ help us the rest of the time?)

Some ideas for discussion: points to include in linking passages

1. A time or day of rest is not about absence of work, but about the creation of something else positive. In Hebrew this is ‘menuha’ – tranquillity and rest.
2. The state of tranquillity/rest/holiness is not brought about through places, rituals, symbols or objects but through our own state of mind: ‘the Sabbath lies within us.’ Ie. It is not about the things around us, but how we ‘sanctify’ those things with our awareness of them. (in Hebrew ‘lekadesh’ – first used in Genesis to describe the Sabbath). Buddhist belief is ‘they who are aware do not die.’

3. This means the ‘Sabbath’, rest, meditation or tranquillity, can happen anywhere. ‘In every place where I cause my name to be mentioned I will come unto thee and bless thee’. It is not about creating a sacred place, but about creating sacred **time** – ‘hi le-olam’ a token of eternity.
 4. The practice of a special day or Sabbath, is also an obligation in some traditions: in the Old Testament it is the 4th commandment ‘Thou shalt honour the Sabbath day’ + *salat* is an obligation in the Five Pillars of Islam, and in particular, on Friday.
 5. In some cases, too, the Sabbath is about congregation. Whilst it is indeed an individual experience, it may also need to be a communal one. In Judaism Shabbath prayers take place both in the family and in the congregation with a minimum of 10 men over 13: in the Islamic tradition with over 40 congregants.
 6. A state of calm/rest/awareness is also about receiving. In Jewish tradition, the day is when symbolically each family welcomes the Shabbath bride, and decks the table in white for her.
 7. All traditions make clear that this special time should not be separate from the other times, but have an influence over the way one lives on the other days too. ‘All the 6 days are a pilgrimage towards the 7th’.
-

See Audio-Visual files 3. TV programmes

Clip 4: Buddhist Sabbath

Clip 5: Moslem Sabbath

Programme 5: The experience of conversion: from Western religions to Bah’ai, Buddhism and Taoism

The idea of conversion arose in the production of programme 4, and the realisation that many West Country friends had moved into religions that were very far from those they were born into. I was interested to explore the impulses that led to these spiritual choices. As with programme 4, I prepared in advance an account of the kind of questions we could ask, and the kind of issues that might arise, as a guide and stimulus.

Letter to participants in the Conversion programmes

The general theme of the programme, is finding a new/another spiritual path. The final version will be 2 little programmes, of 2 minutes interview time each (+ a short intro. and round-up from me into camera).

I thought some of the questions that could be asked are these:

- 1) Were you brought up with any specific spiritual path or direction?
- 2) Were you actively looking for something more, or different? If so, why?

- 3) How did you first meet Buddhism? Did you have a sense from the beginning that this would be something important?
- 4) How did its influence on you develop? Was there a specific teacher? Were there particular texts which influenced you? (we might read these).
- 5) How are these beliefs now integrated into your daily life?
- 6) How do these beliefs influence your work? any specific examples of how your musical ideas have drawn on Buddhism?

If these are the wrong questions, let me know which ones would work best in terms of giving you the scope to talk about your experiences, your music etc.

See Audio-Visual files 3. TV programmes

Clip 6: Buddhism into Music

Clip 7: Taoism into Tai Chi

6.2 Television presenting as knowledge transformation

Much of the information gathered from background reading was not explicitly used in the two minute distillations. Chapter Four described the process of knowledge transforming itself into empathy and connection and forming a bridge between I;Thou which was in itself a third landscape. This was strongly so in the preparation of these programmes. What I gradually came to understand, was that the patterns and rituals designed for daily life connected, for its practitioners, with a sense of divine order. Although grounded, realistic and life-enhancing, these systems seemed to reflect nature's cycles, such as seasonal renewal, the imperative of coupling, death as precursor of life. I could see that, in its ideal and unthreatened form, the systems offered a sustainability and capacity for renewal that nature's own cycle of pollination/seed/bud/blossom/fruit/fall also did. Whilst I did not in any way see this as a *religious* journey, I did feel it offered me an insight into the very anatomy of what it was to be *spiritual*.

The constraint of the two-minute timescale was itself a stimulus to search for the essential; there was a need for absolute clarity as to which questions were key, which information was central. It also emerged, that the participants who shared the programmes with me, felt empowered by information: clear questions and focus. The planning beforehand helped them to identify what they wished to say (and did not), and reassured them that they would not 'dry up', and would have a very real contribution to make. They were also reassured from my notes, that their own voice

would be embedded within a sympathetic broader dialogue, which connected meaningfully with the other programmes and participants.

At a more surface level, new television-specific skills were acquired and internalised. Technical as these seemed, they were the *telling* part of the story; without these, the stories would have simply remained in my own mind and failed to move out towards communication:

- talking off-centre rather than straight into the lens: in order to give the effect of directly looking
- generating a spontaneous/rehearsed conversation that fits exactly into a time frame
- repeating as exactly as is feasible, a conversation that was generated spontaneously
- ‘acting’ the role of listener, for the camera – (what is known in the trade as ‘noddies’)
- memorising a script and producing it as if it is for the first time and spontaneous
- talking, looking into a camera, and walking down a spiral staircase to an exact stair and within a set time frame – all at the same time
- confining one’s message to a set number of words, no matter how much or how passionately one wants to speak
- working with these kinds of constraints, but creating for my interlocutors a setting which is entirely non-threatening and natural
- bringing the best out of my interlocutors within the strange and unnatural context of lights, cameras, and microphone cords hidden down one’s shirt

6.3 Living research: making stories walk and talk

In February 2001, an exhibition of the Jews of Devon and Cornwall came to Plymouth, and I was invited to give two talks in the exhibition to celebrate this.

On my first visit to the exhibition to plan my talks, I was struck by the way a deeply absorbing subject matter had been made dull and prosaic; how the quirky and illuminating stories of families and individuals had sunk into a miasma of worthy

slogans and tedious artefacts in glass cases; how the unpleasant facts – such as the expulsion of Jews from the Cornish tin mines in the 13th century, had ‘disappeared’ almost as if they might offend the locals. By any standards, the story of Devon and Cornwall Jews was intriguing. Stars of David had been found carved on the stonework in the old Quaker meeting houses on the Cornish coasts. An artefact that looked like a carving of a rabbi, had been found on Dartmoor in the tin mines. Lists of clockmakers living in Devon in the 18th century reveal a community with first names like Isaac, Jeremiah, Ezra (Simmons, Pearce and Fry 1999; Hidden Legacy 2000). Somehow the story-like qualities, and the immediacy of lives that had been lived viscerally and physically, did not emerge through the glass cases with their well-placed artefacts and photographs.

My decision was to ignore the exhibition itself, and to tell these stories in the best way I knew: to make these people speak for themselves, through a sequence of dramas. The first drama, *Five West Country Scenes*, told five local history stories as short sketches. The venue was designed for a talk and not for a staging of any kind. There would simply be space at the front of an empty hall, with no option for props or stage effects. Thus I designed the sketches as dramatised readings, to be performed with minimalist staging and props, by a group of 5: in this case, myself, two friends with experience in professional theatre, a poet/performer (my husband), and a drama teacher. The sketches were performed with props to mark our roles: a soft cap for the workers, a shawl for the rabbi, sacks and bags over the shoulders of the travellers. A scroll held up by the rabbi was rolled between each scene to show the period of time now represented; and at the end of Story 1, the five of us walked off the stage and round the audience with the scroll held up high at the front, in a parallel of the Sabbath ceremonies in synagogue, and the emptying of our space. These staging decisions were made by the five of us in discussion and in workshop during our brief rehearsal periods. The plays were written, rehearsed and staged in one month from first concept to final performance.

Local story 1: The expulsion of the tin mine workers

The first known signs of a Jewish community in the West Country are the remains of an alloy figure inscribed with four Hebrew letters, dug up on Bodmin Moor near Helmen Tor. It was most probably left behind by the Jews who developed the tin

mining industry during the reign of Henry II. Legend has it, that when the boats landed with the Jewish tinmine workers, they called the place Ketzei HaEretz, or Lands End. Under Henry II, many concessions were granted to Jews: they were allowed their own consecrated burial grounds outside the city walls, and they were allowed to work in any trade of their choice alongside Christians. The years 1160 - 1287 were a brief safe haven in England for Jews, before the Synod of Exeter brought in new laws of constraint that led, finally, to expulsion or death. Known places in which Jews were drowned and suffocated to death, were the rocks by the Secret Gardens of Halagon, and the bridge over the River Bovey.

Narrator 1:

July 18th 1290: by order of the king Edward 1: to the sheriff of all counties in England. All Jews are ordered, on pain of death, to leave the realm before 1st November 1290.

2 travellers (overlapping)

Do not ask for us on the rocks
At Halagon the bridge at Bovey
Where once we passed
On pain of death we pass no more
And you will not hear us
 You will not hear us
 No, now we are quiet
 You will not hear us.

(Spiro 2001a)

Local story 2: Johanna of Dartmouth

Johanna is believed to have been a Jewish woman who, through bad luck, sailed into Dartmouth in 1290 seeking work, and saved her own life by agreeing to convert to Christianity. I imagined her, clever and brave, focused on survival at all costs, able to fight for life with dignity and wit, not as a saint or martyr but simply as a courageous working woman passionate in defence of her own rights and those of her children.

Prosecutor: Is it the case that you entered the port of Dartmouth and did so without reference to the royal edict of our sovereign king Edward 1?

Johanna: It is not true.

Prosecutor: I am given to understand it is true.

Johanna: We entered the port of Dartmouth to earn an honest living.

Prosecutor: It is not your right to earn an honest living.

Johanna: Not a right, to earn an honest living? Then is it a right to earn a dishonest one? (*background laughter*)

Prosecutor: You jest, madam. You understand well my meaning. You are a Jewess.

Johanna: Must I then earn a dishonest living?

Prosecutor: It is of no concern to me, nor to the kingdom of England or to our sovereign Lord. Our concern is that you take yourself elsewhere and absent yourself from this place immediately and as from this moment on pain of death.

Johanna: How am I to live by the laws of this realm?

Prosecutor: Be other than who you are.

Johanna: Who I am is a mother. Am I not to be a mother? Are mothers not allowed in this realm? Is this realm to breed a regiment of monsters without mothers? Then I pity it.

Prosecutor: You are perverse, madam. Mothers we have in plenty. You are a Jewess.

Secretary: (*whispered*) I understand there is a principle of conversion, sir. They can be admitted as converts to the Christian faith. I've heard it done, sir. They done it, the vicar of Buckfastleigh, he done it sir.

Prosecutor: By royal edict is this done?

Secretary: By royal command to the Keeper of the Domus Conversorum: read sir, here, this bit, sir.

Prosecutor: I decree that the converts who intimate in good faith conversion to the Christian faith be admitted for the term of their lives to the sovereignty of England, and grant them the wages of converts, 1d a day. Are you able to satisfy us in this matter madam?

Johanna: To convert?

Prosecutor: To convert.

Johanna: And for this you will have mercy on my life?

Prosecutor: Yes.

Johanna: This act will give me the freedom to be a mother and earn an honest living in the port of Dartmouth?

Prosecutor: It will. Provided that you act in good faith as one of us.

Johanna: My God has no doubt in this. He says, you are the one that must act in good faith.

Prosecutor: Your God? Your God is now our God.

Johanna: Exactly so. This was always the case.

Prosecutor: You are droll, madam. Have you accepted our conditions?

Johanna: Indeed, my change was so swift you hardly saw it. My God has become yours with such alacrity, you did not see Him change.

Prosecutor: Indeed I did not. (*to the Secretary*). Take her to church. In faith, she worships our God.

Johanna: And you worship mine.

(Spiro 2001a).

Local story 3: The Lamb and Flag

In 1715 the mine owner Sir Francis Bassett of Tehidy needed engineers to improve the smelthouse between Hayle and Penzance. He invited to Cornwall a team of

experts from Frankfurt and Wuppertal in Germany, reputed to be experts in smelting and underground work. He was a good and compassionate man, and it came to his notice that the engineers appeared to have different customs to his own. We know that he built for this community one of the first known synagogues in Penzance. So how did this process of mutual understanding come about? I imagine this as a dialogue between the mine owner and his foreman, Brown.

Bassett: Brown, why is it you have not already made it your business to know these people?

Brown: They are very close, they seem quite content together sir.

Bassett: If you do not speak to them, how do you know?

Brown: I do speak to them sir, but not on private matters. At work, I speak to no-one about private matters. At work, I speak about work sir.

Bassett: You are dutiful to a fault, Brown. -----

Later:

Bassett: Well Brown, did you speak to them?

Brown: I did.

Bassett: And did you find out about private matters, this time?

Brown: No sir, not private matters. But I found the answers to your questions, and what the strangeness is on account of.

Bassett: And what is it on account of?

Brown: Their religion, sir.

Bassett: (Silence for a moment). Can you expand, Brown?

Brown: On the Saturday when they do no work, that is the Sabbath: and on the Sunday when they work, that is not the Sabbath. On that account, they do not work on the Saturday, being a holy day.

Bassett: Very good. And the food?

Brown: In this religion which they have, the food from the pig is forbidden. Also, the food that is meat must be specially slaughtered, in a special way. If it is not, then it is forbidden. Fish with a hard back like lobsters or oysters are forbidden. But fish with a soft back is not forbidden, you see, sir.

Bassett: I see you have learnt their language very well, Brown.

Brown: Oh no, sir, They have learnt our language very well.

Bassett: And the Friday night candles?

Brown: The Friday night candles light up the beginning of their Sabbath day. Their day begins at night, so to speak sir: their Sabbath day begins at night on Friday and ends at night on Saturday, which is the end of the day which is the holy day for them, sir, if you see my meaning.

Narrator:

Francis Bassett's family papers show that he had a small synagogue built for the tinminers' community, somewhere between Camborne and Hayle. The symbol of the Pascal lamb, centre of the table during the Jewish Passover service, became the trademark for the smelthouse. The symbol of the lamb was smelted onto every block

of tin. A hostelry built for the workers was called The Lamb and Flag, and the inn, which still bears that name, uses the smelthouse symbol as its sign.

(ibid)

Local stories 4 and 5: Travellers to and from the East End of London

Clip 8: Work in the East End

Clip 9: East End synagogues

The second play, *The Seed and the Tree*, focused on a single point in time and a single community: the wave of immigration to the East End of London from Russia and Poland in the late 19th century. I chose this in order to unravel the 20th century community in the West Country that had travelled from the East End, and then on to Devon and Cornwall, becoming highly established and successful families on arrival. Here my research was largely library based, as many of the families (described in the Devon and Cornwall Exhibition) had since moved on, and time constrained me from tracing them. I thus chose to tell the ‘archetypal’ story of their arrival, and to unravel some of the variety, complexity, pressures and tensions of the community.

My resource was, as before, documents, diary records, prayerbooks, journals, poems, Yiddish songs and lullabies, and library resources at the Leo Baeck Centre. (Roden 1999, Amichai 1978, Flammer et al 1985, Lichtenstein and Sinclair 1999, Mendelsohn 1996).

I planned the play as six short ‘acts’, moving from arrival, through work, marriage, education, women’s role and rights, the synagogue. To mark progression, the play starts with the morning arrival of the immigrants at St. Katherine’s Wharf, and ends at dusk with the evening prayer and lullabies over the children’s cradle. The sections each explore a social tension: the pressure to work on the Sabbath, the attraction of the suffragette movement for the young women émigrés, the dilemma as to choice of school - a faith school or not?. Emerging from these cameos are individuals too; rivalry between two sisters; their mother who tries to rebuild the Russian kitchen in the East End. As with the first play, the design was for our group of readers to ‘perform’ as a dramatised reading, with the inclusion this time of Yiddish songs to highlight key parts of the story: the song of the naughty schoolboy accusing his father of having been naughty once too; the song of the young girl begging her mother for a

match; the song of the synagogue usher hushing the chattering women in the women's gallery.

The opening sequence dramatises the arrival of the Russians at St. Katherine's Wharf, juxtaposing voices derived from the Metropolitan Police Report of 1887, with the confusion and bewilderment of the arrivees themselves.

Bureaucrat 1

Those arriving by the London General Steam Navigation Company's vessels are in the majority of cases disembarked at St. Katherine's Wharf where a limited number of very decent English porters assist the Immigrants from the ship with their luggage at a very reasonable charge (Metropolitan Police Report 1887)

(thin Yiddish melody heard in the background during the cacophony of arrivals at the wharf) MUSIC 2)

Older sister: (overlap last few words)

none of the porters can speak Yiddish

Bureaucrat 1: they are unable to direct the Immigrants to the addresses which they usually bring with them to their friends

Younger sister: Polish?!

Bureaucrat 2: they are unable to explain to them that their safest and cheapest mode of reaching their destination is by taking a cab

Bureaucrat 1: Occupations of new arrivals - Amber turners Bakers Barbers Bookbinders

Older sister: German?! Does anyone speak German?

Bureaucrat 2. (overlap) bootmakers brassfinishers bristlesorters butchers

Younger sister: Russian? Any Russian?

Bureaucrat 1:

comb makers confectioners coopers coppersmiths coral worker

Bureaucrat 2: furriers galvanizer glover gruel makers hawkers

(Spiro 2001b)

The characters are representative of their types: there are 2 bureaucrats who 'speak' the variety of documents that reported the immigrants' arrival, two immigrant sisters, and their parents. The sequence takes the family through the cycle of a single day, from dawn to dusk. I 'transformed' into dialogue detail about their lives - for example, the young girls trying out the new London fashions, the technicalities of the hat-making trade, the wide number of skills and trades brought into the East End by the immigrants.

Sister 1: I can make hats

Sister 2: (overlap) felt hats

Sister 1: measuring caps, pasting tickets, stretching furs, nailing furs,

Sister 2: making fur rims, pasting buckram, hanging pieces, drying pieces

Sister 1: pressing pieces, moulding pieces, turning on gas jets,

Sister 2: heating the press, trimming the edges, sewing the edges

Sister 1: by hand

Sister 2: all by hand

Factory owner.: The girls employed are very quiet in the factory but a wild lot outside, especially the girls who sew caps

Gossip: Most of the Jewish girls are tailoresses or dressmakers so they learn the latest and most outrageous fashions

Factory owner: they wear paint and powder altering their features until they are quite unnatural

Gossip: they tend to go quite to extremes

Factory owner.: personally I have an abhorrence of cosmetics

Registrar 1: jewellers ladies' tailors mineral water makers pipe makers pouch makers pressers potters printers rabbis

Registrar 2: rope makers saddlers seamen, ritual slaughterers, soap-boilers scribes stick makers surgeons

The two plays, *Five West Country Cameos* and *The Seed and the Tree* were performed in two consecutive weeks at the Plymouth Museum. The first performance was well attended and the response enthusiastic. When the doors opened to the second performance, however, we were astonished to see the complete Sixth Form of a nearby school file in, accompanied by their teacher. The second play was received rapturously by the schoolchildren, with a standing ovation and a roar of delight when I was asked to take a bow as author, director and performer.

6.4 Performance as transformation

How is *knowledge* studied, heard and overheard, transformed into belief, performance and production? Through the medium of dramatised story, I felt able to 'realise' and transform a number of different 'knowledges'. If one's relationship with the present means 'the past is a foreign country' (Hartley 1958: 1) then this process brought the 'other country' nearer and into focus. It also involved a close questioning of how historical evidence informs and enlightens our current sensibilities. Engaging with the past through evidence became as significant a process as engaging with any 'other' culture, and expanding one's receptivity to its complexity.

As with all the projects described in this chapter and the previous one, constraint proved to be a great stimulus for creativity. Working with a group of five friends, who combined singing and acting skills offered opportunity, but limits in terms of staging and timing. Each of us played multiple characters, so each had to be quickly and clearly delineated - through visual attributes (such as the hat, the shawl), and through powerful characterisation.

Both the projects described in this chapter started with a request to 'represent' Judaism in some way; yet in both cases, my efforts were to combine both specificity and its capacity to be universal. *The Seed and the Tree*, for example, was intended as a larger story of migration; and I had hoped the audience might connect it with current debates about asylum-seekers. It was a matter of great importance, that my own 'empathy' with the 'other country' might '*make sense through transformation in the real and material world*'; so the acclaim of the schoolchildren studying Judaism as part of their curriculum, was important. My interpretation of this, was that some of my own 'empathy for the other' had been communicated to them; and a 'school subject' had, in the process, become a 'living issue' for them.

I have thus far explored the nature of a creative 'voice', and its gradual adaptation to constraints, other audiences and other readers. This section has also shown the transformation of knowledge/information into empathy and stimulus for creative production. In the process, the chapter has also suggested the importance of information in the empowerment of others. The next section will focus on this empowerment of the other within educational contexts, and the ways in which such an empowerment can be accountable and measurable within the higher academy.

Section C I as creative educator

How does knowledge transformation manifest itself in my practice as a creative educator? How have I found connections between creative writer: creative educator roles?

Chapter Seven

Learning to change: knowledge transformation as educational process

My role as educator is to provide a rich environment that empowers learners to find and express their own voice.

This chapter illustrates the core value of **empowerment**. It aims to show how this value is realized, and fully embedded, within the educational process, and at the same time, how it connects and is congruent with my own experience of writing creatively and struggling with creative process, as described in Chapters Three to Six. The chapter also illustrates what *knowledge transformation* means in an educational context. It aims to trace the changes effected by learners when learning is taking place, and learner recognition of this through messages, diaries and evaluations.

These processes will be illustrated with reference to four narratives:

- 1) Transforming knowledge as an educator: steps on the journey
- 2) Finding a voice: developing creativity through criticality
- 3) Becoming visible: the process of turning personal classrooms into public statement: *Creative Poetry Writing* (Spiro 2004).
- 4) The neverending story: the process of planning, trialling and writing *Storybuilding* (Spiro 2007).

7.1 Transforming knowledge as an educator: steps on the journey

This section will illustrate stages in the journey towards empowering others through teaching. It will work with the broad notions of creativity explored in Chapter Three, and summarised by Pope (2005) as: “to make, do or become something fresh and valuable with respect to others as well as ourselves” (Pope, 2005: xvi). I am congruent here with my belief that creativity is teachable and the capacity of “the sane and healthy”, rather than the specially talented. The pedagogy in this chapter is also founded

on the belief that creative processes can be nurtured and developed, and that these processes need to take account of both inner drive, as well as fine-tuning to audience (Section 3.3). I am mindful that, for those who do not regard themselves as creative, this might be more accessibly expressed as a capacity to play - what Grainger calls “a kind of passionate and playful intensity with full cognitive and affective involvement” (Grainger, Gooch and Lambert 2005: 197). Boden describes two kinds of creativity - exploratory and transformational, or the owning, and then playing with, systems. Fostering this in learners means giving them “the chance not only to practise the relevant style of thinking, but also to analyse it, to play around with it, and even to transform certain aspects of it.” (Boden 2001: 96 – 98). It is this combination of understanding, analysing, playing, experimenting, and transforming ‘rules’ (poetic, linguistic and educational) that the examples below will illustrate.

My first post at Bedford College of Higher Education (1980 –1986) was one of multiple roles:

- teaching literature from O-level to BA Honours level
- teaching English as a foreign language to the international community in the area
- running a certificate programme for training teachers of English as a foreign language
- training volunteer English teachers for VSO, and setting up practice for them in language centres for newly arrived immigrant children

These roles were intended to be separate: in fact, before my arrival, had been performed by three different people. But from my early experience I began to experiment with ways of ‘crossing over’ between these categories. I recognised that each of these contexts yielded opportunities which I would like to offer within the other contexts too.

- the literature teaching gave my learners, from 16 to 70, the opportunity to engage with words, texts and images as expressions of human experience
- the EFL teaching gave my learners the opportunities to engage with and empathise with people from other cultures and world views

- the certificate programme gave learners the opportunity to make the transition from learning, to empowering others to learn
- the VSO programme gave learners the opportunity to prepare for travel, to anticipate and reflect on their imminent cultural displacement and acculturation

I was aware, subliminally at first, that these opportunities were less fully available, because of the expectations the learners brought to each class:

- the literature learners did not expect to engage with problems of personal and cultural identity, but only with texts and words
- the EFL learners did not expect to be given opportunities to *know* more than the teacher: they arrived vulnerable, with the expectation that they were there to receive, and not to give
- the trainee teachers, in preparing classrooms for effective learning, did not expect to be learners themselves
- the VSO trainee teachers expected to bring to their new classrooms a functional English that would serve instrumental purposes, and did not expect to make ‘use’ of their own experience of displacement and identity

This combination of experiences, opportunities and blocks became the melting pot from which much of my practice has since evolved. First tentatively, and then with increasing engagement in my task, I began to conquer the ‘blocks’ by evolving strategies for ‘crossing over’ from one context to the other.

- In the literature BA course, I evolved and then validated a new course in Cross-Cultural Literatures. In this course, we looked at poetry, story and testament from India, the Caribbean and Africa (Nigeria and Kenya). As the ‘crossover’ developed, I brought in poems from the language classes, letters and photos from my VSO teachers in these countries, and then my own artefacts too: and built into the assessment a ‘creative response’ in which the students ‘wrote back’ in any form they chose – poem, story, letter, with a commentary on their processes.

- In the EFL classes, I began to develop carefully controlled (and thus linguistically realistic) tasks by which the learners could share with me stories of their lives, their homes, how and why they came to be in Bedford, their journey here, what they had left behind, where their aspirations lay – here or there- and why. These tasks led to small texts or free poems: sometimes a single image, sometimes two sentences, sometimes a haiku-like poem. The lessons were not framed as ‘confessionals’: they were framed in the way learners expected – *present perfect*, *asking directions*, or *writing a recipe*: the activity itself sometimes lasted only five minutes, but they acquired an accumulative weight over a term. Added to their growing confidence in ‘speaking’, was the knowledge that, with their permission, their words and images were being shared with BA literature students, to help them understand literatures from their countries.
- With the trainee teachers, I opened these classes for observation. Towards the final year of my work at Bedford, there was hardly a class which was not observed. After the class, we would discuss events, and evolve together other plans and ideas, usually with roles reversed and this time with me observing. This stretched the expectations trainees had, of what could be done in a language classroom, and what could be done within the scope of the expected language syllabus. It also gave them the opportunity to observe the difference between mechanical and surface learning, and engaged and deep learning: and to observe what impact this had, too, on the teacher’s experience.
- When the VSO training courses began, I brought the trainees into the loop of observation and supported lesson planning; and once they were in post overseas, invited them to write with news of their classes and their experiences, and with poems or images generated by the activities.

Student images from language classes: Bedford, London and Switzerland

If clauses: If + past tense + --- would

*If love was wind
I'd move clouds when I'm worried.*

But love isn't wind

And my memories are pinned down.

(Japanese student)

I remember + verbs of the senses(see, hear, smell, taste)

*I smell you everywhere, I remember
Everytime I come here and see you
A lovely sun in summer I remember
A beach and a boat and a bird
On the beach, a child with white dog I remember
Walking along a beach
Below the boat a charming dolphin I
Remember
Swimming in the sea in a group
In the sky a nice bird I remember
Singing in the beautiful blue sky
I saw the ocean I smelt the ocean
I tasted the ocean I heard the ocean sounds
I will never forget how I saw you
Even today*

(Chinese student)

Whilst these cycles were highly effective modes of survival, for me as a newly qualified teacher, they had the following limitations: the cycles were indeed designed for survival, in an ‘ad hoc’ way, with many of the tasks emerging spontaneously from classroom contexts. Neither the activities, nor the student outcomes, were carefully recorded; nor did it ever occur to me to make these new programmes sustainable so other colleagues in my institution could continue them when and if I should leave. In fact, the training programme did indeed fold behind me when I moved onto my next post: and the Cross-Cultural literatures course continued but I learnt was something of a struggle for those who took it over. This was the era anyway of lecturer privacy and autonomy: minimal accountability, and random record-keeping. It was not a culture where colleagues learnt from one another, or ever questioned their mutual capacity to pick up a course and run it ‘in their own way’. So whilst I might have been doing something new, I was not aware of this, nor aware of its impact on the system as a whole. We each taught in watertight capsules, and what we did was no more publicly available than a personal diary.

In 1987, when I began work as course manager of teacher training programmes in Switzerland, this privacy was blown open. My more public role meant it was no longer enough to evolve ideas intuitively without making the rationale both explicit and available to others. My first invitation to speak to teachers from the canton came early in my posting. Here, I replicated the process for them, of moving from appreciation of a text (a poem or short extract of story), to creation of text: using identification with themes, or experimentation with language, as the bridge from one to the other. From these events, it was possible to evolve detailed and subject-specific rationale:

- appreciation of a text is more meaningful when readers have ‘entered into the shoes’ of the writer, and experimented themselves with the writer’s strategies and themes
- creating personal texts such as a poem or story engages the ‘whole’ learner in a way that other merely language-focused exercises will not:
- it provides them with an incentive to write for an audience: and thus to edit and reformulate their work, with an awareness of both the writer and the reader
- more importantly, it gives the learner the opportunity to share information which is unique and not replicable by the teacher or any other learner in the class: and thus alters the balance of informant: informee in a way that gives the learner power and autonomy
- it provides a context in which new language can be learnt in order to fill a perceived communicative need, rather than to meet the needs of the coursebook or syllabus

As the practice became refined and moulded by these more clearly stated values, new questions arose::

- What are the strategies and processes which have worked (or failed to work) for me as a writer, and are these generalisable or teachable?

- What processes, for me, characterise movement into linguistic adventure and change lived story into created story/text?
- How could these strategies be transformed into learning activities and with what effect on learners and learning?

With these questions, subliminal or otherwise, I began to formulate activities which were more carefully structured, theorised and recorded. Rather than ‘scraps’ of poems copied from student work at the end of class, I began to meticulously collect notes recording the full process by which these texts were arrived at. Below is an example of such a process, evolved over a number of years, and in a number of guises: with young newly-arrived Bedford refugees, Swiss trainee teachers, adult language learners in evening classes, Spanish school girls in a Catholic secondary school, adult pre-university international students in the UK.

Fundamentally, the activity draws on two powerful strategies which are part of my own practice: firstly, and in congruence with the value of *wellbeing*, is the activity of praise – contemplating what one admires, and shaping this admiration into a linguistic act of thanks; the second is the power of metaphor to make our thoughts capture the quintessential and the symbolic.

The activity starts by discussing the notion of *praise song*. Whether or not learners have met this as a term, much can be unpacked from the two words: **praise** – something we love, value, admire, describe in words, an admiration made known, ‘flung to the heavens’: **song** – something chanted out loud, perhaps with musical instruments such as drums, perhaps accompanied by dance and movement. All of these are the case with traditional praise song from black Africa. Just a few lines capture their quality and impact:

You lime of the forest, honey among rocks,
Lemon of the cloister, grape in the savannah.
(from an Amharic love song, *highlands of Ethiopia*) (Heath 1993: 102)

My bull is white like the silver fish in the river,
White like the shimmering crane bird on the river bank
White like fresh milk! (*from a Dinka praise song, south of Sudan*) (ibid: 104)

Having introduced the topic of praise song, shared interpretations of what it might mean, and offered examples, the stages of the activity involve moving ever nearer to the learners generating songs of their own. The first example above is praising a lover; the second is praising a bull. But praise songs could be about anything we admire: Pablo Neruda, for example, writes in praise of ironing:

It wrinkles, and it piles up,
The skin of the planet must be stretched,
The sea of its whiteness must be ironed. (Neruda 1973: ii)

A moment of visualisation gives time for the group to conjure up something loved and admired, object, activity, human being, animal. In my own experience of this activity, I conjured up my violin, to which I have been monogamously attached since the age of 14. Other participants have chosen to praise: the hairdresser, the washing machine, new shoes, although more frequently, praise is for best friends and family members. Especially is this the case when the learners are distant from home, and my examples in this section will be from such a group - a group of adult international learners on a short course in the UK, away from home for three weeks during a cool English summer.

Our next stage is to form a collective list of the objects of praise, as in Column A below. Having done so, and allowed this to illustrate the shared values in the group, I offer to the class a second list of words describing the natural world, side by side with the first. The task is simply to choose the word from the 'natural' list that most exactly describes/compares with, the praise object; or to add a new one that suits better.

COLUMN A	COLUMN B
Husband	Shell
Wife	Rock
Sister	River

Brother	Lake
Mother	Stream
Father	Mountain
Aunt	Flower (rose, violet)
Friend	Fruit (lemon, lime, peach, fig)

Table 3: Blackboard plan for praise poems

With this choice, a simple first sentence is formulated. There are two choices here:

Simile: My _____ is like a _____
eg. my mother is like a lake, my father is like a rock

Metaphor: My _____ is a _____
eg. my friend is a shell, my wife is a rose

We have, in one move, leapt into the realm of linguistic adventure. However new the process of writing creatively in English, however great the blocks, there is no participant who has not been able to respond to this process.

From this point, the writers are asked to ‘grow’ their metaphor (or simile) by explaining in two or three short lines, why mother and lake (or father and rock, or wife and rose) are similar.

Poems from Oxford International Summer School class

My sister is a tree

She is tall and I look up at her
She is freshly green and she gives me oxygen.

When the wind blows at me, she sings for me through the leaves.
When the cloud comes, she cries for me through the rain.

She keeps growing and offers me bigger shelter,
Oh, how I love my sister!
And I hug her round with both my arms!

(Student from China)

My grandmother is now an orange

Her skin is no longer smooth
She's seen – not only – sun in her days
At 90 she's still full of juice.
(*Student from Peru*)

My brother is a tree.
While his roots burrow deep,
He grows up into a new world.
(*Student from China*)

My husband is a river
He flows quietly along
My daughters are flowers
Even their skin blooms
(*Student from Switzerland*)

In some ways, the poems are their own testimony. They reveal both the universal story - the common experience of life and loves, and the specificity of these stories; the lively 90-year-old grandmother, the brother just leaving home who 'grows up into a new world', the fresh skin of young daughters: 'even their skin blooms'. The poems also illustrate the balance between revealing self – 'Oh how I love my sister!' – and establishing a safe distance through metaphor – 'she is a tree'. Most of all, the poems also make clear that capturing feelings creatively and memorably is within the capacity of every language user and learner.

To be fully congruent with the process, I offer here a poem I wrote alongside my students, in response to this task. I began with the violin as my love object. The violin then became a metaphor for marriage: my violin is my husband/my husband is a violin. As the one became the other, the following poem evolved, and I add this to the mix. It will be apparent to the reader that I broke my own 'rules' – starting with the simple figurative sentence and proceeding to 'unpack' the metaphor. As a writer, I edited out this first opening line, making the poem something of a riddle, making the reader work at interpreting, and making both halves of the metaphor equally strong: is this about a husband, or is it about a violin? The process of editing, selecting, introducing further layers of ambiguity, is something my learners may have progressed to, had there been the purpose and objective to do so.

I knew from the first moment
we would find a voice, a way to sing,
you just wood and string
without me, and I a reaching
in space, a breath between notes
without you.

I knew how the singing
would be, like a kite on air,
a running like a wild child
into sea.

I wonder now about the mystery
in your wood, if you mourn the forest
where you were, if the wine-brown memory
in your grain holds all the singing
we have done, all the ways we have
reached for new notes,
all the ways we have found our place.

A version of this section was published as Spiro 2007b.

The next section will look at ways in which student writing was developed to more complex and sophisticated levels, and how critical appreciation of other texts can be a starting point for this.

7.2 Finding a voice: developing creativity through criticality

In Chapters Four and Five of this dissertation, I drew attention to the importance of *voice* in the notion of authorship, and connected this authorial voice with empowerment. The section above illustrates the connection between the two in an educational context, specifically exploring how learners new to the creative and critical process are guided towards authorship, and in so doing find a new voice for their feelings and values.

This section shall address the same questions and connections, but in a very different context. The group now described, are full-time MA Literature students at Oxford Brookes University, with a strong educational background in critical

response to texts. What they have not had, however, is the experience of connecting this critical response to their *own* authorship. In fact, each year of critical reading in secondary and tertiary education is likely to have decreased incrementally their sense of being able to contribute to the canon. With this awareness, I evolved a module which made explicit that criticality would be developed as a stepping stone towards creativity. Students who elected for this module thus were electing to reverse a long educational expectation of creative silence.

In the section above, I defined creativity as the connection between order and chaos, drawing on Boden's concept of exploratory and transformational creativity. (Boden: 2001). Whilst these processes will remain relevant in this second context, another approach to creativity more exactly defines the nature of what will be explored here. Cropley (2001) describes the 'phase' approach to creativity as involving four stages:

Information phase: "a person becomes thoroughly familiar with a content area"

Incubation phase: "the person churns through or stews over the information obtained in the previous phase"

Illumination: "marked by the emergence of a solution" – or in the case of creative self-expression, the learner/writer finds the words that express and transform the message

Verification: "the person tests the solution" - in a creative writing context, evaluates their own writing, tests the response of others, and verifies its power and acceptability. (Cropley 2001: 71- 72). He goes on to add two further levels, communication and validation (and in so doing, is summarising the work of Wallas 1926). These two phases will be explored in Chapter Eight, with reference to the evaluation and judgement of creative output.

Cropley, and Wallas acknowledge that the first two processes, information and incubation, are often bypassed by the creative personality. These four stages may be less a description of creative process, than a description of the 'scaffolding' or

guiding of creativity for the uninitiated. Specifically, for literature students, these four stages represent more nearly what they are familiar with in the critical process: encounter with a content area, revisiting of content, creative approach to content, checking of approach by reference to others. Because of this familiarity, it offers face validity for the students whom I discuss in this cycle of activity.

The students combined native English speakers and international students on scholarships and full-time leave from their own countries. These included: Peru, Nepal, Brazil. Thus the content area I selected took full cognisance of the nature of reading and writing in a second language. As with the ‘crossover’ examples described above, I aimed to ‘cross over’ issues of language, language learning, and the non-mainstream voice ‘writing back’ to the mainstream. This section will ‘walk’ the reader through our classroom process as learners/teachers: from critical reading and content analysis, to creative output

For the writer who chooses to write in a second/foreign language, the act of writing represents in itself a creative tension:

- my mother tongue is the language in which I evolved into childhood and adulthood, and with which I learnt to relate to my environment
- the foreign/second language is the one I have chosen, in this instance, to communicate to the outside world my inner messages; yet it is not the place in which I first received these inner messages.

In Chapter Four I cited the feelings of the Polish poet Milosz with respect to this tension:

Faithful mother tongue,

You were my native land; I lacked any other.

--without you, who am I?

*Only a scholar in a distance country,
a success, without fears and humiliations.*

Yes, who am I without you?

(Milosz 2002: 336)

This tension is echoed by, for example, black African writers such as Chinua Achebe who describes his identification with Robinson Crusoe rather than Man Friday as a child; as an adult coming to realise that Robinson Crusoe was the ‘other’, and Man Friday was in fact ‘self’; and then, as a writer, coming to realise that it is this ‘other’ man’s language that will bring him recognition and readership across the world. (Achebe 1986). In symbolic terms, every writer deals with the same tension between the personal, inner voice and the ‘voice’ of the ‘other’ culture. However we experience this, we are all somehow negotiating a ‘first language’ in a ‘second language’ culture: whether this ‘second language’ is another register, another community or culture, the discourse of the opposite gender, the culture of the company or academy. In other words, we all have domains in which we are ‘insiders’, and domains where we experience the conventions as outsiders.

What can the creative writer do with this tension, that the journalist, or literary critic, or advertising copywriter cannot do? Chapter Two explored the different options from my own perspective as author of this PhD. I reiterate these options here, in order to show congruence between my own decisions as a writer, and those I share with learners in educational settings. The creative writer can

- create a personally constructed ‘interlanguage’ that falls in between the personal, inner voice, and the dominant, outer one
- use the ‘insider’ voice of their community – the ‘nation-language’ - to reverse the power imbalance by making this voice the dominant and heard one
- juxtapose the dominant voice and the personal voice, to show the dialogue between them
- layer the personal voice and the dominant voice so, within the narrative, the reader slides between one sensibility and the other

The sections that follow will explore each of these strategies in turn.

Creating a personal interlanguage/idiolect

Dear Jonathan

*I **hanker** for this letter to be good. Like you know, I am not first rate with English. In Russian my ideas are asserted abnormally well, but my second tongue is not so **premium**. I undertaked to input the things you counseled me to, and I fatigued the thesaurus you presented me, as you counseled me to, when my words appeared too petite, or not befitting. If you are not happy with what I have performed, I command you to return it back to me. I will persevere to toil on it until you are appeased.*

(Safran Foer 2001: 23)

Here the author Jonathan Safran Foer reflects on himself as language mentor, as seen through the eyes of his Ukrainian translator Alexander. Alexander, who is ‘premium’ in his mother tongue, is deprived of this fluency by having to mediate through his mentor’s language. He is, in this respect, the perfect student, clearly poring over the thesaurus, which the reader is able to see has failed him miserably. We can identify easily the words which Alexander picked from his new book: *hanker, asserted, premium, undertaked, input, fatigued*. What can we say about these words? Why did he choose them, and why are they incorrect?

A study of these ‘errors’, given that we ‘trust’ the author to be giving us reliable data, reveals several things:

- it may reveal to us ways in which the semantics of certain Ukrainian phrases do, or do not, map over those of the English language
- it will reveal to us the specific learning mechanisms of the speaker Alexander
- it will reveal to us the specific strategies of the author, who has ‘constructed’ Alexander’s voice in order to offer us a mirror of his character.

Word found in the thesaurus	Likely connotation in the mother tongue	Reason for the lack of synonymy
hanker	long for, greatly wish for	hanker carries the connotation of obsession, lust and appetite. It collocates with phrases such as: an absent lover, a dog with its bone
premium	first-class	premium as an adjective is most frequently collocated with words connected with money, insurance and financial bonds. In contemporary English the connotation of ‘first class’ has unfortunately fallen into second place

Table 4: Constructing an interlanguage: Alexander’s idiolect

In constructing Alexander’s voice, the author has ‘entered’ into the ‘other’ – become the language learner he once was or could have been as a second generation emigre from the Ukraine.

Singing out the nation-language

Braithwaite uses the term ‘nation-language’ to describe the voice of a community, and in contrast to the term ‘dialect’. Dialect defines itself by reference to the mainstream language, which it assumes to be the dominant or ‘standard’ one: whilst ‘nation-language’ defines itself by reference to the people that speak it. (Braithwaite 1999). Choosing the nation-language,

therefore, is a mark of connection and identity. It differs from the idiolect of Alexander/Safran Foer above, because in using the nation-language the writer speaks not only for him/herself but for all the language community. An analysis of the language, therefore, will reveal to us features of the shared community.

Half-caste

*Excuse me
standing on one leg
I'm half-caste*

*Explain yuself
wha yu mean
when yu say half-caste
yu mean when picasso
mix red an green
is half-caste canvas/
explain yuself
wha yu mean
when yu say half-caste
yu mean when light an shadow
mix in de sky
is a half-caste weather
nearly always half-caste
in fact some o dem cloud
half-caste till dem overcast **John Agard***

What are the features of this nation-language, and what do we learn by exploring it? We learn, by looking at Agard's example above, that the language is a uniquely oral one, and that spellings reflect the spoken idiom. The poem is one half of a dialogue, but the poet has silenced the other speaker. This time, it is the turn of the half-caste to reply, to be heard, and to be the dominant one. We sense the presence of the 'oppressor' as the other interlocutor, but we do not need to hear him/her to understand his/her attitudes and language.

Voices in dialogue

The author may choose to reverse imbalance by ‘singing out’ his/her own voice and silencing the other – as with the John Agard poem above: or he/she may choose to bring the two voices into open dialogue. Grace Nichols chooses this latter strategy in *i is a long memoried woman*. Her “skill at slipping in and out of modes of English is as good as any and she manages to make ‘nation-language’ seem not a duty, not a deliberate act of ‘rooting’ but a gift, joyfully received.” (Markham 1989: 37) Indeed, in her long poem she addresses directly the nature of losing and finding language: and of carrying contradictory languages within oneself.

*I have crossed an ocean
I have lost my tongue
from the root of the old
one
a new one has sprung* (Nichols 1993: 87)

She slides from this contemporary voice to her ancestral voice, which symbolises her memory of self as a slave amongst the sugar cane. Here, she literally ‘sings out’ her first sight of the the ‘massa’s wife arriving from the ‘cold countree’:

*O buckra woman she come over de sea
with she round blue eyes from she
cold countree
She walk straight, she head high
she too fenky
she better take care she don’t turn
zombie*

*O buckra man him come over de sea
with him pluck-chicken skin
from him cold countree* (ibid: 44)

The reader is swung between ‘voices’ in a patchwork of memory and time zones. Eagleton defines ‘defamiliarisation’ as a reversal of dominant and subordinate:

Jakobson and his colleague Yury Tynyanov saw the history of literature as itself forming a system, in which at any given point some forms and genres were ‘dominant’ while others were subordinate. Literary development took place by way of shifts within this hierarchical system, such that a previously dominant form became subordinate or vice versa.

The dynamic of this process was ‘defamiliarisation’: if a dominant literary form had grown stale and ‘imperceptible’ -----a previously subordinate form would emerge to ‘defamiliarize’ this situation. (Eagleton 1983: 111)

But Nichols has not reversed the roles of the two languages; she has done more than this, by rehabilitating both to speak for her. Yet all the examples we have explored above invite us to ‘renew our perception’ of language, and in doing so ‘politicise’ us into an understanding of which languages are being heard, and which silenced. Shklovsky describes the ‘renewal of our perception of everyday language’ as the essential quality of poetry, and was the first to define this as ‘defamiliarisation’ or ‘ostranie’. (Cited in Jefferson and Robey 1986)

Multiple voices are at their most interesting and intense, when the writer acknowledges their presence as internal as well as external dialogues: as dialogues which “not only exist between outsider (and) insider – two entities – (but) also at work *within* the outsider or the insider – a single entity”. (Minh-ha 1999: 217). Minh-ha asks whether ‘a superficial knowledge of the other, in terms of some stereotype, is not a way of preserving a superficial image of oneself’ since ‘one’s sense of self is always mediated by the image one has of the other’ (ibid: 217). It is thus part of what the writer does in ‘finding a voice’, to move from stereotypical to rounded views of both self and other, and to recognise that both these selves co-exist internally. Grace Nichols adopts the language of the Massa and his wife in order to speak to and about them more directly. Unlike them, she is able to shuttle between their language and her own nation-language in order to express different aspects of herself in time and space.

Experimenting with voices

This section will explore the phases of creativity Wallas/Cropley (2001) described as ‘illumination’ and ‘production’ or which Boden (2001) described as ‘transformational’ – when the field of learning, the analysed systems, are transformed into new output and a bridge is constructed between: *what I observe in other writers* and *what I can do in my own writing*. The experiments were

trialled, in modified form, with general English students at much earlier stages of the language learning process, before they were developed with the MA students. I thus offer examples from both communities in my discussion below.

The MA students started with discussion of the texts, in much the way that we have done within this section. Their own experiments were ‘knowing’ ones that drew on their experience of close reading and recognised the origin of their choices. They had also experimented with ‘textual intervention’ in which student writing becomes ‘rewriting’, ‘re-visioning’, ‘re-membering’ a source/stimulus text. (Pope 2002). Thus this group were a highly conscious one, accustomed to examining their own processes and those of other writers.

The general English students, in contrast, were not engaged in a response to other texts but drew on their own ‘voices’ as a starting point. Here myself as teacher asked another set of questions: which of the writer strategies explored above could be framed in order to represent an achievable challenge for my learners? I will present these experiments sequentially, and with reference to the texts and underlying principles that inform them.

Principle 1

THE CRITIC

A focus for the postcolonial writer, is the search to make heard the voice of self or community that has traditionally been silenced. For all of us, this is a metaphor for the ‘inner’ voice that has chosen, or is unable, to make itself visible to the outside world.

THE TEACHER

Is there something which you have wanted to say, but never been able to:
either to a member of your family, a friend, a teacher, or anyone else?

THE STUDENTS

Students have shared the following examples of unsaid and unfinished conversations:

-a boy I played with every summer when we were little: one year I noticed he had begun to grow a beard- in fact he was growing up. I couldn't play with him, I was so upset – and I never saw him again. I'd like to explain and say sorry. (*a French-speaking English language teacher at a training workshop in France*)

-when I grew up, I was convinced I had been adopted, and that I wasn't living with my real parents. I'd like to tell my boyfriend about this, and how it has affected me. (*an English-speaking student in the MA class*)

-my father is very strict. Now I am away from home I am much happier. I would like to explain to my father why I am happier here. (*a Japanese student in a Creative English class*)

-after the evacuation was over, I was so excited to meet my real mother again, that I just ran to her and never said goodbye to the family that had looked after me for ten months. I sometimes think about that, and wish I could say goodbye now, but we lost touch. (*English teacher at a training workshop in London*)

Principle 2

THE CRITIC

The writer may choose to be distanced from his/her own experience; in order to articulate it more objectively, in order to see it from the outside, in order to widen its significance from the personal to the communal.

Jonathan Safran Foer created the character of Alexander, the Ukrainian interpreter, through whose eyes much of the action is seen.

Grace Nichols does not name her narrator in *i is a long memoried woman*, since she speaks as herself, her ancestors, her community.

THE TEACHER

Give the characters in your conversation fictional names. (Voice One and Voice Two)

They are no longer you and your interlocutor, but two fictional characters who can say, act, behave, in any way you choose.

Invent a third character, who overhears or accidentally becomes involved in your conversation. (Voice Three)

Jot down key words to help you define each character: age, gender, appearance, personality, favourite words and expressions.

This distance from self has proved to be essential to the methodology of these experiments. My own experience, and that of other experienced facilitators such as my colleague Rob Pope, bear out the observation that

“the opportunity to express – indirectly, through the rewriting of another’s text, rather than directly through an unmediated confession ‘in one’s own voice’ proved particularly enabling. ---- The personal can be made public without being paraded, and acute issues can be broached with relative impunity.” (Pope 2002).

Principle 3

THE CRITIC

We may choose to silence the ‘other’ altogether, and command attention for our own voice/self, as John Agard does in *Half-Caste* (speaking not as *me*, but as *my community*)

THE TEACHER

Choose one of your three voices,(the one that wishes to speak the most urgently) and let him/her speak uninterrupted for 10 or more lines.

THE STUDENT

No
I have my pride
I will not make the first move
Definitely not
I will not apologise
At my age? To say sorry?
No
I have my pride

I can see him waiting for it though
I can see him triumphant and victorious
How much more pleasant it would be
To have me bent
To have me humiliated
To have me weakened
Naked
No
I have my pride
And I will not lower myself.

Aurelie (French MA Student)

Principle 4

THE CRITIC

Multiple voices are more fully realised when we see the ‘other’ in a rounded (not stereotypical) way. Thus we might, like Grace Nichols (or Lorna Sage as described in Chapter Two), imagine the language of our ‘other’ characters: the significance they attach to key words, pet phrases, idioms that ‘mark’ the character in time, place or value system.

THE TEACHER

Choose a phrase which is typical of each voice:

eg. “Can’t say fairer than that!” (Samad’s voice in Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*).

Drop the phrase into your voice every 5, 10 or 15 lines, like a refrain.

THE STUDENT

Key phrases: *It’s As Simple As That!*

Although I do feel as I grow older how much like Dad I’ve become, in spite of ranting at him for all those years for being such a Victor Meldrew, self righteous and just as bald. “It’s As Simple As That!” used to conclude most of his tirades of sweeping generalisations about the world. It’s never as simple as that, Dad, but it does seem to shut them up, doesn’t it? *Charlotte (UK MA student)*

Principle 5

THE CRITIC

The writer can represent different voices and viewpoints, by embedding these into (what appears to be) a single narrative viewpoint. Yet

individual words, phrases, idioms will ‘float’ between the sensibilities of the main narrator and others in the text.

THE TEACHER

Choose a word which has a ‘heteroglossic’ meaning: ie. the same word, which means something quite different for each voice: eg. ‘bad blood’, ‘the old devil’ (grandmother’s voice in Lorna Sage’s *Bad Blood*).

Drop the word into each voice 3, 4 or 5 times, building up a context so the reader understands what the word means for each speaker.

THE STUDENT

collaboration:

to you collaboration is something positive, being co-operative, sharing ideas
to me it is quite the opposite: collaboration is what you did as an
informer, spying on one another, talking to the enemy.

*Oh yes, we collaborate now in the staffroom. Oh yes.
And we did before, in the old days.
There was always a collaborator then, watching you.*

(Hungarian MA student)

Principle 6

THE CRITIC

The extract from Jonathan Safran Foer’s novel revealed to us how much more we can learn of a character, when he/she is allowed to speak in his/her own idiolect. Yet, in relating to the character of Alexander, we also worked with the following assumptions:

- the author had tailored this language, with its revealing and eccentric language usage, intentionally
- the author had the option of many different voices, and in fact demonstrates this to us in the course of the novel
- we therefore trust that the author is capable of exact semantic matches between word and meaning, and that the mismatches are part of his strategy in order to ‘illuminate’ the character of Alexander

If none of these were true – if, for example, the novel had indeed been written by an incompetent translator throughout, and we as reader had no trust in the translator’s recognition of his own errors – would we tolerate the narrative in the same way? In other words, would it be equally fine, and equally fair, for a language learner to be permitted to write a poem or story, and generate errors of this kind?

Our answers lie in the intentions of our writers.

- Are our learners aware of the errors they are making?
- If so, is their preference that these errors remain?
- If these errors do remain, what will be their impact on the reader? – in other words, will they detract from our understanding? will they detract from the mood or intention of the writer?.

THE STUDENT

Below is a poem produced by a student in a beginners General English class. He was asked:

Remember your first day at school.

Who do you remember?

What do you remember?

Finish the sentence: I remember -----

I remember

I remember football

I remember teacher

I remember tunnel

I remember my father

I remember sumo

I remember children

I remember school bus

I remember friend

I remember climbing frame

I remember my mother

(Takao: Japanese student)

THE TEACHER

Were the missing articles significant? My decision was, that no, they were not. Firstly, the lack of articles did not in any way impair comprehension. In fact, the omission of the articles made the two possessive pronouns ‘my father/my mother’, all the more significant. It also contributed to the rhythmic pace of the poem. The lines without articles follow the pattern *I remember + noun* – setting up an iambic beat that is consistent in all but one line (I remember school bus). A smattering of definite, indefinite and zero articles would have broken up this pattern. In short, Takao has developed an ‘idiolect’ which expresses his message more successfully than a ‘sanitised’ version, and which at the same time provides a ‘snapshot’ of his language at an exact point in time.

Principle 7

THE CRITIC

In our discussion of Grace Nichols’ poem, we looked at the way two ‘languages’ provide a dialogue with one another: and the fact that these can be interpreted, not only as ‘inner/outer’ voices, but as both voices belonging to the poet: poet as contemporary woman, poet as the vehicle through which ancestral voices are articulated.

THE TEACHER

A class of general English intermediate level learners, was divided into two.

Group A were asked to write sentences about a party, using the structure

The music is playing

The people are talking

Group B were given a secret instruction:

You walk into a crowded room. You don’t know anyone. Write down what you feel.

After 5 minutes, the groups are asked to stop writing. Each student is asked to find a partner from the opposite group.

Now they must work in pairs, and make a 'sandwich' of the lines they have written down. They are encouraged to repeat the lines they like best.

What emerges is a meshing of voices:

the outer voice – classroom language, the language of drills and regulated structures

the inner voice: expressing vulnerability, often in short phrases, in first language utterances (this is acceptable)

The students recognise, reading their lines aloud, the commentary that emerges between the voices, in spite of them having been written and conceived separately.

THE STUDENTS

The music is playing.
The people are talking.

I don't like this.
I feel shy.

The people are dancing.
The people are laughing.

I want to go home,
I don't know anyone.

I am eating nice food.
I am drinking nice drinks.

I am smaller than the others.
The people are too big.

The music is playing,
The people are talking.

I don't like this.
I feel shy.

Creative English class, Plymouth

What if both halves spoke to one another? As an example of the creativity generated by such a concept, I include here a poem from a pre-intermediate Japanese student, describing a person and his mirror.

Today I met a friend.

I was so glad I was not alone.

*I waved and he waved back
I hugged him but he couldn't
I kissed him but his lips felt cold
I touched him but he felt smooth
I said hello but he didn't reply.*

*Today I met a friend
I was so sad I felt I was alone*

<i>I felt sad</i>	<i>he looked sad</i>
<i>I got angry</i>	<i>he got angry</i>
<i>I shouted</i>	<i>he shouted</i>
<i>I cried</i>	<i>he cried</i>
<i>I hit him</i>	<i>he was broken</i>

(Junko: Japanese student)

Finding Voices and the learning process

We started this section with a quotation from Czeslaw Milosz, talking of his mother tongue:

*--without you, who am I?
Only a scholar in a distance country,*

and with the premise that the first: second language tension he describes is a metaphor for all the 'distance countries' which must be linguistically negotiated in the process of becoming communicatively competent.

The 'finding voices' exercises described above, aim to give learners opportunities to bridge this distance.

Language learners are given framed and achievable opportunities to record their memories and 'unspoken' dialogues

Students of literature are given the opportunity to bridge the divide between reading 'received' texts, and deriving from them insights for developing their own voices.

I will end with the words of these latter students, whose commentaries provide a support to the original texts they produced.

My entire family --- has instilled the belief in me that I could forego recognition from 'the system' all together for the sake of writing from the self. ----- My professors, especially Jane Spiro and Rob Pope, (are) -the providers of hope that criticism (the other) and creativity (the self) can indeed be harmonized. (*Kim: American MA student*)

I have taken a lot of pleasure in writing this collection. George Gomori said: "Only in my language can I find salvation/ For I can describe in English the mysteries/Of life, the universe in all its glory,/But only in my mother tongue can I compose/ The words that make a sunset glowing." It is true. But in my case I could never have written this collection in French, my language of truth, in which I am too vulnerable. English is a sort of shield I can hide myself behind; it allows me to say whatever I want without being compromised. Yet I hope I managed to touch you. (*Aurelie: French MA student*)

A version of this section combined with Chapter Two extracts, was published in 2004 and can be found in Appendix Reading 21: Finding Voices: Making Strange

7.3 Becoming visible : from privacy to publication

The two sections which follow will explore the process by which the many years of educational experiment described here, became honed and disciplined for publication. In the creative hierarchies we have discussed earlier, this final stage represents the ‘communication’ and ‘validation’ of my own educational story. The ‘validation’ process, inevitably, involves confronting the values and priorities of the validator, sometimes in stark contrast to one’s own. In this case, the new ‘values’ to be incorporated into the process of production, were those of the publisher: tried and valued house styles and commercial goals connected with known market trends and preferences.

My plan for *Creative Poetry Writing* was that it should represent a resolution of many of the issues described in the evolution of practice above.

- It would demonstrate to other teachers, systems and strategies for generating learner voices in the language classroom: thus dealing with the lack of sustainability and collegiate sharing I had experienced at Bedford College.
- It would show how these learner voices could be generated even in classrooms with highly structured language goals: thus dealing with the problem of marginalisation in traditional test or national curriculum driven contexts
- It would place learner voices side by side, rather than in hierarchies of success or failure

With these goals in mind, the proposal was floated to Oxford University Press (OUP). OUP editors applied a different kind of rigour to the plan. I summarise below, using their voice:

- You talk about learners’ voices through poetry, song and story: but how can you cover all of these effectively? If song is included, how can this be dealt with, without the

production of an audio-cassette that would be costly to produce?

Decision: the book would deal with poetry only, and a separate book, at a later stage, would deal with story.

- Are the 'learners' here children or adults? If children, there are other books on the market which have become classics in the field. Although these are designed for native-speaking children, and many in American settings, they still represent competition and make your proposal less attractive.

Decision: to focus on adult or older school learners

- Including complete texts by contemporary writers will open up many copyright issues and incur considerable extra expense. It may also skew the focus of the book towards reading and critical skills.

Decision: to limit the use of 'stimulus' texts, offering these only as alternative suggestions for more advanced classes

- Many of the activities are rather unconventional and may, for example, lead to noisy classes. How will you convince the traditional teacher to try these out?

Decision: each activity would discuss alternatives for large classes, or for different modes of interaction.

- The series in which this book would fit is to be relaunched in April 2004. To meet this deadline the manuscript would need to be delivered by May 1st 2003, six months from the issue of the contract.

Decision: I will write the book within the timescale and not attempt to gather new data.

The process was one I had been through before, writing stories for an educational market and working within constraints. Previous chapters have shown how these

constraints were empowering, and helped to originate creative processes. More complex, in this case, was the ‘packaging’ of a process already evolved, into a newly introduced constraint. With *Creative Poetry Writing*, the publisher’s concept entailed the following adaptations :

- I lose the breadth I had planned, of story: poem: song, basing it on poetry only. This, could, in fact, be an opportunity. The final version divided the poem into 70 components, moving from individual sounds and clusters of sounds, through to word-building, word-mixing, sentence patterns, sentence and clause connections, and text types. Parallel to each linguistic category, was a thematic and/or poetic category such as simile, metaphor, alliteration, rhyme, refrain and chorus, repetition.
- The decision to limit the scope at this stage, also meant that a second proposal would be a possibility. This second book would be dedicated to the use of story in the classroom, and would explore the notion of archetype and story principles overlapping from therapy, theatre, and folk tale (as described in Chapter Two).
- I would have to invent the cautious and cynical teacher, sitting on my shoulder and critiquing each activity. Whilst this teacher started out as a stern harridan I had to appease with more cautious alternatives and provisos to every activity, she gradually became a ‘critical friend’ who guided me towards clarity, balance, perspective and realism.
- I would have to find a linguistically recognisable category for every scrap of learner output I had collected over twenty years. The inclusion of each one would need to be justified in terms of where they fitted in the framework and what they illustrated about language.

- The book would need to be written retrospectively as a cumulation of experience: since the timescale made new trials impossible

I demonstrate my response to these decisions by considering four activities which have been effective in the classroom, and have been so, because they were informed by some aspect of my own life experience as a ‘creative’ writer. The activities and analysis that follow take account of these several frameworks: how did the activity evolve as an outcome of my own authentic struggles with the creative process? How did learners respond to the activity? And what can be learnt, as a result, about both learner creativity and the transition from writer process into classroom activity?

Within each example, I shall ask the following questions:

- How and why did the activity evolve, and how does it parallel my own questions and processes as a teacher and writer?
- What student outcome was intended or expected?
- How did the students’ response compare to these expectations?
- What can be learnt from these responses?

Example 1 Red, the money goddess: words and connotations

Summary of the activity

Students are asked to divide up the words in the box below, between those they associate positively, and those they associate negatively. They are then asked to compare their list with a neighbour, and notice similarities and differences.

Where possible, they are then invited to explain their choices.

A final stage asks them to choose one word from the box, and write a poem in which each member of the group describes/lists/defines /explains their association.

fountain	rose	dog	dove	crow
apple tree	island	thorn	wolf	fox
snake	dragon	wizard	witch	bird
spring red	seven	thirteen		
white	sun	moon	night	star

Table Five: Blackboard plan for word association activity

How and why did the activity evolve, and how does it parallel my own questions and processes as a teacher and writer?

My work in different cultures and contexts drew to my attention the assumptions embedded in words, and the importance of these assumptions.

During my work in Hungary, for example, I had occasion to revisit several meanings which acquired sinister and negative connotations in a Soviet surveillance culture:

- Collaboration (as in the example in Section 7. 2 above from a Hungarian student)
- Information

Working in India I was surprised and, initially shocked, to be introduced as follows at the opening of my literature workshop:

“Although she looks like a young and spritely girl, she is in fact 35 years old.”

I came to understand that **young** in the Tamil Nadu culture where I was, meant unschooled, green, naïve; whilst **old** meant authoritative, wise, impressive. To appear young before a distinguished gathering of academics, was not necessarily a

good thing. The experience caused me to review the powerfully invasive connotations a Western (American/British) culture gives to these terms. There are few contexts in which *old* can be used in English with a positive connotation – apart from old wine. Similarly, if one wishes *young* to attract any of the meanings suggested above, a new word entirely needs to be used.

I evolved this activity as an experiment to sensitise learners, in the same way, to the cultural values and assumptions embedded in words. I had hoped for issues such as the following to arise from the discussion:

- dragon to a Chinese person is the symbol of creation
- white to a Hindu is the colour of death
- red to a Hindu is the colour of marriage
- thirteen began in the pre-Christian symbolism, as an indivisible number that had mystic properties

What student outcome did I intend or expect? How did the students' response compare to these expectations?

However, with a monocultural group of Swiss learners, the key words revealed a snapshot of their own personal and collective cultures, without deconstructing or destabilising assumptions.

Thirteen

number of the house where I grew up
age to stay out late
age to change schools
beginning of teen years

(Swiss teachers)

Few in a contemporary Western culture would dispute that thirteen is the age when teenagers start to push for their own independence: there was discussion about whether this happens earlier still, what 'staying out late' might imply, whether children of all educational backgrounds 'change school' at thirteen: but

in essence, the exploration was of their own culture and little was revealed about other world views.

A mixed class of Indian learners generated the following lists, which also combined personal connotations – red is blood – and culturally understood ones: - red is the colour of the Hindu wedding sari.

Red

dangerous, like blood
beautiful like a wedding sari
wealth, it's the face of the money goddess

White

it is pure, a burial gown
the colour of ashes
the colour of the water lily
big on water

Group poems by Indian students in Chidambaran

What did I learn from these responses?

It emerged that, unless the activity was more carefully framed and with a culturally diverse group, the words might simply reinforce rather than extend stereotypes and assumptions. 'Careful framing' might involve unpacking the following possible associations with and between words:

- a story, myth, nursery tale connected with the word
- a visual or verbal memory
- the positive or negative *connotations* of words
- where our feelings about words come from
- what effect sound has, on our understanding of words
- whether or not these effects are culture-specific

What also emerged, is that few of the learners from India and Switzerland referred to stories as influencing their interpretation of words. 'Wizard' appeared to be a time- and place-specific word of high visibility to *Harry Potter*-reading British

teachers but less so elsewhere (and perhaps outside this specific time frame too). It would be interesting to replicate this activity, and see how far ‘dragon’, ‘apple’ or ‘wizard’ evoke stories modern, ancient, mythical, Biblical or other in more diverse groups.

Example 2 Words like sea shells: similes about language learning

Summary of the activity

The activity invites learners, first of all, to list in the –ing form, activities they enjoy doing: such as wind-surfing, swinging in a hammock, eating ice cream, holding a baby. These –ing phrases are listed on the board.

The following phrase is then written in front of all these phrases:

Learning a language is like

The resulting blackboard may look like the one below, generated by several classroom versions of this activity:

Learning a language is like
wind-surfing
climbing a mountain
playing the guitar
listening to music
sleeping
surfing the internet
mending a shoe
swimming an ocean
sitting in a white room
collecting sea shells
polishing stones

Table 6: Blackboard plan for simile activity

The students are then asked to choose which contrast they most identify with, and to explain or expand their choice in a few lines or phrases.

How and why did the activity evolve, and how does it parallel my own questions and processes as a teacher and writer?

When I first arrived in Hungary with no knowledge of the language and little of the culture, I similarly searched for metaphors to describe my feelings of being encapsulated and contained inside my mother tongue. I worked with images of being a nut inside a case, a bird inside a cage, a changeling. The formulating of these images helped explain and, in some ways, resolve the experience. The images I ‘played with’ were these:

*I am a changeling plucked and wrongly placed,
my richness a caged nut, my history locked
like a prison door.
This is my rebirth, born
into a tunnel that is no perch
but a moving on to find where darkness leads,
to forget where from.*

In 1998, language learners were invited to send poems ‘on any subject’ to the first Poetry in a Foreign Language competition, organised by White Adder Press, with Donald Adamson, Martin Bates, John Daniel and myself Jane Spiro as judges. (See Bates 1999). Amongst the entries most enlightening as to the learner experience, where those in which learners sought metaphors for their learning:

*English is as interesting as
a trip to something you don’t know (Ana Jimenez Martin –
Spain)*

*English is around me, every season that I see.
It’s the snow that falls in winter. (Teodora Petrova Ivanova –
Bulgaria)*

*Learning a language
is like doing a jigsaw puzzle
of a million pieces (Olivia McMahon – Scotland)*

(Bates 1999).

I could see that an activity might guide learners towards creating and exploring metaphors like these. My reasoning was, that the second half of the metaphor would be elicited from the learners and thus within their language grasp: and that ideas would then be placed side by side, in effect, creating the ‘chaotic leap’ of the poet. The task left to the learner would simply be to ‘fill in the gaps’ by justifying and explaining how the leap had taken place: how IS language learning like wind-surfing? (or gathering shells? or doing a jigsaw puzzle?).

What student outcome did I intend or expect?

I expected this framework to generate a rich new resource of potential metaphors, each one of which might raise some interesting perspective on the learning process. What I also expected, was to generate the readers’ natural desire to find meanings: to find connections between disparate items, if they are placed side by side in a text. Swanson summarises this process of creating and interpreting metaphor: “It preempts our attention and propels us on a quest for the underlying truth. We are launched into a creative, inventive, pleasurable act.-- A metaphor is a peremptory invitation to discovery.” (Swanson: 1994: 162). Is this what happened, however, in the classroom?

How did the students’ response compare to these expectations?

The activity was trialled with two groups of multilingual adult learners, and one group of Cypriot teachers, since 1998. Their more challenging responses are as follows:

- learners in the first half of the activity, suggest activities which at first appear uninteresting when compared with language learning:

eg. reading a book, surfing the internet

However, on revisiting, and when learners and I work hard on the connections, these do emerge:

*reading a book:
but the pages are empty and you must fill them
you understand the words but not what the whole book means
you never know what will happen on each page
each page is a lifetime*

After three trials, in the end it appears that almost any phrase can be fruitfully compared to the learning process. After some practice, I became more adept at helping learners to recognise these for themselves.

*Learning new words
is like climbing a mountain
collecting stones on the way
polishing them
putting them in your pocket
so your journey is slow
the stones are heavy
but when you reach home
some of the mountain is still with you*

*I collect words like sea shells.
Each one is different.
They are
white, pink, grey,
many colours.
I remember places I have visited.*

(Classroom notes)

What did I learn from these responses?

What arose from the experiences of these activities, was a further question: Is it the case that some cultures are more deeply oriented to the notion of metaphor than others? Some learners and learner groups responded with particular warmth and ease to his activity: others not at all. Was this culture-driven? For example, learners from India and Sri Lanka adapted to this framework as if it was part of their very thinking process.

Swiss teachers were resistant to the notion of using poetry at all – initially: but responded with warmth when they realised how easily learners could be led towards these outcomes, and how rich the outcomes could be.

Example 3 I remember climbing frame: Talking about the past

Summary of the activity

The activity is simple, and yet acts as a window to memory. The learner is asked to write as many sentences as they like, beginning

I remember.

The ‘title’ of their memory is suggested by the teacher and could include:

- rites of passage, such as the first day at school, the last day at school, the day I left home for the first time
- moments of joy: the peaks
- moments of disappointment and despair: the troughs
- archetypal plot moments: separation, reunion, reconciliation

The learner is then asked to describe the activity through the five senses:

I remember + smells, sights, sounds, tastes, touch.

I remember + objects, people, colours, places

How and why did the activity evolve, and how does it parallel my own questions and processes as a teacher and writer?

In preparing initial notes for my novel, *Nothing I Touch Stands Still*, diary notes relating to my visit to northern Poland were of particular importance. (See Chapter Four). I had visited a wall, standing at the centre of a field on the edge of the town, which, on closer encounter, revealed itself as formed from a mosaic of broken tombstones with Hebrew lettering. This memorial wall became the catalyst for the novel. However, what made the notes compelling, were sensory descriptions of how I reached the wall: the sounds (squelching through loose snow), the touch (freezing water around my badly waterproofed boots), the sight

(pitch black icy water), the taste (snowflakes falling into my mouth and melting). It was the potency of this description that caused me to revisit and revisit the moment and turn it eventually into a story and then a 78,000 word novel.

What student outcome did I intend or expect?

I hoped the learner would be able to use the structure to say as much or as little as they chose or were able. Structurally, *I remember* can be completed:

- simply with a noun: a place, a person, an object
- a noun phrase using the five senses: the smell of--, the sight of ---the
- an -ing phrase to introduce action
- a complete subordinate clause, introduced by when/where/how

How did the students' response compare to these expectations? What did I learn from these responses?

The main surprise in setting up this activity, was to discover how powerful the 'titles' were in evoking memory. When setting up 'peak and trough moments', some learners were overwhelmed by the sudden impact of memory, unprepared for in a language class.

For example: exploring the plot archetype of 'separation', one participant refused to continue, complaining that I had not appreciated that a group in the class had experienced the Berlin Wall (pre- 1989), and that she did not wish to think about this issue in class.

I understood that, in any class I was meeting for the first time, this topic was certainly too potent: that I would need to choose themes that were 'safe' and did not lead to vulnerability, unless I was entirely sure of the class, and they of one another.

The topics were derived from therapeutic contexts where the emotional framework was carefully prepared, the 'client' received individual attention, and there was a controlled 'climbing down' period (Rogers: 1990). To drop these powerful contexts into a language class without these frameworks was irresponsible, and I learnt from my error.

In future versions of the activity, I worked only with the 'rites of passage' theme.

On quite another level, I also found that, the more specific the memory, the more interesting and precise were the outcomes.

Your first day at school

suggested more to learners than:

A memory of childhood

for example: and the guidance of the five senses also helped the process, for learners who needed this.

the smell of ---

the taste of ----- etc.

I remember crying

I remember roundabout

I remember laughing teacher

There were many children

There were many teachers

There were many textbooks

I remember decorations

I remember swim

I remember embarrassed mom

I ate school lunch

There was a lot of food

I remember everybody looked happy

I remember I felt happy

I remember I felt nervous

But

I remember the sight of nothing

I remember the smell of nothing

I remember the taste of nothing

I remember the sound of nothing.

*(Kaori, Yumiko, Adel: Japanese, Korean
and Omani students)*

I remember the sight of nothing

I remember the smell of nothing

I remember the taste of nothing

I remember the sound of nothing

(Junko: Japanese)

Example 4 A visualisation poem: Go and open the door

Summary of the activity

The activity involves the teacher reading a short visualisation, in which the learners imagine a secret and hidden door appearing in the classroom: they open the door and enter it. Inside is a room, full of objects from their past life until that moment. They walk around the room, remembering and thinking about each object, picking up and touching

each object. Then they choose one object they would like to take away with them. They pick it up, leave the room, close the door, and return to the desk where they are now sitting. During the visualisation, the speaker stops at various points and asks the learner to write:

- what they think will be behind the door
- when they enter the room, what objects they see there
- which object they choose
- why they have chosen it.

How and why did the activity evolve, and how does it parallel my own questions and processes as a teacher and writer?

The inspiration for this activity, was my experience of a visualisation exercise in which the learner imagines a journey to a ‘wise person’, the question he/she would ask, and the answer he/she might receive. (Hall and Hall 1990). The visualisation helped me in concrete ways as a newly arrived teacher in Hungary. When I was overwhelmed by the alienness of my circumstances, I took myself through this journey again, lying on the floor of an orange-painted apartment on the 11th floor of a Soviet high-rise. The wise person in this journey reminded me that a few yards from the Soviet high-rise, were cherry trees, vineyards, and views over cathedral spires and domes.

As a more specific linguistic incentive, the poem ‘The Door’ by Miroslav Holub offered a further catalyst. The poem is divided into five sections, each beginning with the incantatory command: *Go and open the door*. Each stanza then goes on to speculate what might be behind the door, mingling the concrete and feasible – a tree, a dog, a garden, - with the surreal and magical: a magic city, a picture of a picture.

I found the repetition of the line, *Go and Open the Door*, haunting: and symbolic too, of every writer’s journey into the imagination. I liked the fact that the poem never quite tells the reader what is behind the door, but only offers possibilities. I liked too, the strangeness and arbitrariness, of what might be there; that it is likely to combine the entirely trivial with the cosmic, as so many of our hopes do.

At first, I used the poem as a model for learners to work with. Their task was to complete the line *Go and open the Door*, with possibilities of their own. But as the activity

evolved, I realised that I was not taking this as far as it could travel: that working with a visualised journey would release the imagination more fully.

The activity evolved in the way it did, because I wanted my learners to have the same opportunities to be comforted by the answers from their past lives: using the artefacts they found and chose, as a symbol of the comfort we receive from our own histories.

What student outcome did I intend or expect? How did the students' response compare to these expectations?

The outcomes from the 'first version' of the activity were revealing. Learners, as I had hoped, used the open door as a symbol of where they wanted to go, or what they wanted to know. In a way, the process was loose enough for them to move in any direction, and they did so, enjoying the freedom of the form.

However, when I moved into the second, visualisation, version, something else took place. My own 'script' generated a trance-like calm in the group, the writing seemed to be intensely private, and the paired exchange of ideas was animated. However, the outcomes were not pieces that learners wanted to share, or to 'publish'. I understood, from the first trial of this version, that the exercise opened up a private dialogue – just as it had done for me: and that authenticity meant that these should remain private. I have data from the first, more mechanical version of this activity: and quote it here; while conceding that the real 'open door' may be into the secret interiors or the 'inner chaos' which actually are not subject to the crafting and socialising of the first stage.

*Go and open the door.
You fear it?
Go, don't hesitate!
Go and open the door, even if there's an
enemy.
Go and open the door, even if the
weather is bad.
Go and open the door, maybe there's
your friend
Waiting for you.*

*Go and open the door, maybe there's
bright sunshine outside.

Go and open the door.
Don't hesitate,
Maybe there's someone waiting for your
smile.

(Nicholas)*

*Go and open the door.
Maybe there is my past surroundings
Maybe my friend is there.
Then I can change what I did do,*

*If there's no freedom from my parents
I will be free.*

*Even if there's only me
Even if there's only powerlessness*

*Even if there's only boredom
Go and open the door.*

At least there'll be a happy life for me.

(Miho)

Please see Appendix Readings 11 and 12 for further examples of student poetry in response to these activities.

Please see Appendix Reading 13 for student evaluations of their creative writing experience.

This section has offered examples of activities connecting teacher and writer, and which are congruent with authentic life/writing experiences. As an indicator of the activities' effectiveness, students were able to respond to the activities with texts that appeared to access both the 'chaos' and the 'order' aspects of creativity: – the free association of ideas, such as a beautiful island, desert, little sound, star, dead leaf in the *go and open the door* activities: the spontaneous and individual, such as memories of “embarrassed mom”, teachers and textbooks of the *I remember* activities, or the responses to key words such as ‘thirteen’: “number of the house where I grew up”. At the same time, ‘rules’ and patterns appear to have provided a support and springboard for invention. The *I remember + five senses* pattern yielded effective imitation/subversions, as in “I remember the sight/the smell/the sound of nothing”; the *go and open the door* pattern appeared to unlock the free association of ideas that followed. Some used the pattern to generate a concrete world: a field, a bench, a desert: others to generate an abstract, hypothetical or fantasy world – powerlessness, a happy life, freedom. However, the activities also revealed the complexities of individual creative process. For some, the activities set up blocks rather than ‘release’ - such as the student who blocked the *I remember* activity because of her Berlin wall memories. On other occasions, the activity allowed retreat into the familiar rather than challenging this – as in some responses to the ‘cultural words’ activity. Some processes involved resistance – as with the metaphor activity, where the elicited ‘second half’ of the metaphor was too literal, limited or prosaic; others involved

so deep an engagement, that the shaping of the experience into crafted writing appeared inappropriate, as with the visualisation exercise.

It is thus not sufficient to say: *I learnt this way, so it will work for others* - but it is sufficient to learn from one's own turning points, and to ask pedagogic questions about these. Would it work with learners? How would it need to be prepared or modified? What would be the specific learning goals? How will I know if it has worked or not? Most interestingly, learner responses reveal the complexity of the creative process: the nature of blocks, the balance between the chaotic and ordered minds, the effectiveness or otherwise of specific stimuli, the role of cultural frames and values. Some language teachers have been sceptical of the value of expressive/literary approaches to poetry production in class, on the basis that these are "likely to be most successful in the hands of teachers who themselves write creatively" (Hyland: 2003: 10). We can conclude that this may certainly be true, but that all teachers are engaged in creative processes both in and outside the classroom. They simply need to recognise these, reflect on them, reconstruct them pedagogically, and bring them to class as vehicles for authentic learning. However positive or negative the outcomes, the experimentation with 'real-life' processes is one that makes the classroom a crucible in which learning and 'creating' can authentically take place. **A shorter form of this section was published in Spiro 2007a.**

Finding a voice

Creative Poetry Writing represents answers to each of the questions posed at the start of this chapter, which have formed a structure for my career in education/creative writing:

- What are the strategies and processes which have worked (or failed to work) for me as a writer, and are these generalisable or teachable?
- How can these strategies be transformed into learning activities and with what effect on learners and learning?

Part of the process of compiling the book, involved contacting students to ask their permission to publish their work, often from many years ago. I quote below one response to this request for permission:

Dear Jane,

Firstly, really thank you for your e - mail. To be honest it was indeed suprising for me the news that you send me. I had forgotten the poems that i wrote at Marjons 4 years ago in our poetic class.

The clear answer to that you ask me is tottaly YES. I am indeed positive in establishing our poems in the Oxford University press. Actually Iam very glad for the think that they will established and please led me know what will happen. To be honest really thank youu of trying and doing that for us. Iam really proud of you and I hope yor work is going well.

If the thinks go well, of coarse I am able to come there and celebrate with all our class of us, indeed including all the people hat urge us to that. The celebration is the most appropriated for us.

I hope that God is gonna bless you forever for that nice things you do for us.

Best wishes
Miranda!

See Appendix Reading 14 for extracts from *Creative Poetry Writing* (Spiro 2004).

7.4 The neverending story: building *Storybuilding*

The poetry book paved the way for a second, written in 2005/6 and published in 2007, representing a similar 'retrospective' on story writing activities developed over many years. A similar process of compromise, loss and gain was involved as in the first book. Specifically, my aim in the story book was to move away from a close affiliation between language goal: creative output, and to look more directly at the connection between lived story: created story. Topics in the original proposal included:

Living stories: writing stories – making links***Inner and outer self: talking to your selves******Where you are comfortable: place as self******Potions and lotions – looking for instant solutions***

This angle on the book was resoundingly rejected by the publishers' readers, with quite visceral responses ranging from 'pretentious', 'therapeutic rather than educational' 'unuseable for language teachers'.

Since I had evidence, both from my own writing experience and from learner responses, that the activities themselves were entirely useable and educational, my understanding was that the way they were 'packaged' needed to be changed. The topics thus needed to be bedded within clear and discernable linguistic and narrative objectives that would make sense to teacher, reader and publisher.

Living stories: writing stories – making links became:

3.2 Story stars: people in stories, people in life	Elementary to advanced	10 – 40 minutes	vocabulary to describe people: jobs, descriptive labels, nicknames adjectives to describe personal qualities short phrases: someone who---, someone with--- - adverbs: always --	developing a character through typical features To consider the link between story characters and real life characters
--	------------------------	-----------------	--	---

Inner self and outer self; talking to your selves became:

3.8 Inner and outer animals: the toad and the giraffe	Pre intermediate to advanced	30 minutes	Animal vocabulary. Adjectives to describe personal qualities.	Stories about conflict between two characters.
---	------------------------------	------------	---	--

Where you are comfortable: place as self became:

4.1 Comfort and discomfort zones: the elephant in the bus station	Elementary to advanced	10 – 20 minutes	Nouns to describe people Descriptions of places: nouns, adverbs of place, adjectives of shape, size and colour	Looking at how places tell us about people Looking at how people are affected by places:
---	------------------------	-----------------	---	---

Potions and lotions – looking for instant solutions became:

7.3 Advertisements: magical medicines	Intermediate to advanced	30 minutes	superlative adjectives It can..... to describe abilities	Features of an advertisement Key information in an advertisement
---------------------------------------	--------------------------	------------	---	---

The second incarnation of the proposal was received encouragingly, and the reworking of the topics formed a support rather than a constraint in the developing of materials. The final manuscript was sent to one of the readers, whose comments had evolved from ‘disappointing’ to ‘promising’ to this final report, posted on receipt of the final draft:

Reader’ report: Oxford Resource Books for Teachers – Creative Story Writing by Jane Spiro - samples of text

Generally I cannot do anything but reiterate my earlier comments: this is a book which I shall both use and recommend, and I am certain that a great number of teachers worldwide will value it. It offers enormous potential for using story writing for language acquisition, for the improving of writing skills and for best practice in the classroom. In detail it is even better than in outline and the work clearly shows how this has been developed over years in the classroom. It has all the markings of a tried and tested resource book, developed by a creative and talented teacher who incorporates the work of her students. This has come a long way since the first outline and now can be used not only for teaching creative short story writing, but also for encouraging creativity in the language classroom. I can’t wait till it comes out, so I can start using it!

See Appendix Reading 15 for extracts from *Storybuilding*, Spiro 2007.

Storybuilding in process

During the process of developing, trialling and refining the activities for the book, I ran a workshop for 400 teachers at Cecil Sharp House in London. I was able to video and then analyse this workshop, as part of my own development in the writing of *Storybuilding*.

This section will comment on the video recording of this event by asking:

- How can evaluating and analysing this event take me forward as an educator?
- where and how did ‘knowledge transformation’ take place, and what was my evidence for this?

Audio-Visual files 1. Story workshop Clips 1 - 11

The messages of the talk:

Overt messages: In order to ‘start where the learners are’, I open with a poem that caricatures the ‘bad’ creative writing lesson: “Now children, let your mind go blank.

Now start writing”, and the question -“How many of you remember lessons like that?”

(Clip 1). A show of hands in response to this question was intended, to give participants a sense of solidarity with others in the audience; but the group, not quite yet having formed trust, took this as a rhetorical question and instead, laughed (somewhat nervously).

I then progress to the difference between ‘letting your mind go blank’ as a starting point for creativity, and the reverse: trawling life, the world, dreams and experiences, as a starting point. The ‘presentation’ of these story sources/resources is an opening device to encourage the audience to think; “what sources of story are there within me? what does, or would, inspire me to speak out, to tell my story?”. I lead from my own list of story sources, to the question: “Is there anything I have missed out?”(See Clip 2). The audience are invited to share the sources that may, or do, drive them: inner dialogues, life experiences, memories, fantasy, dreams and nightmares, other art forms. In essence, I am suggesting that creativity is not an *ex nihilo* act; that creation ‘is never from nothing; it is always creation from something’ (Pope 2005: 84) .

The second message is the demystifying of creativity as an aspect of human potential, by anatomising it, looking at it in components, changing the vocabulary. The talk focuses on creativity as “something that can be honed, developed and nurtured”, using

frameworks which are familiar, a linguistic ‘scaffold’ that is recognisable to the language teacher: moving from sound/phoneme to whole texts. In other words, the talk reinforces the ‘something’ that is the source of creation: what one brings to the creative act in combination with what one knows about, and can already do, with language.

Covert messages: the covert aim was to address the criticisms of the sceptic teacher whose response I anticipate as: “creative writing is woolly and does not, cannot have, clear learning goals”, and “I am not creative/imaginative. I hated ‘creative writing’ at school, so how and why should I put my students through this?”, and to convince them of the view that: creativity is an aspect of psychic and intellectual health, it can be honed and developed, and we all have the potential to be creative.

In terms of workshop ‘architecture’, I was planning and designing a transition from passive to active, from recipient to participant, from sceptic and resistant to empowered and engaged; and with the covert message:

“If this process of empowerment has been true for you during this talk, then you have a strategy for giving the same empowerment to your learners.” This transition was designed to happen, both in small cycles throughout the session within each topic/activity, and in a larger cycle from start to finish.

My roles in the talk

In Chapter One Section 1.5 I identified some of the several metaphors for the teacher - for example,

- teacher as releaser and midwife
- teacher as co-ordinator, conductor and democrat
- teaching as positive identity development
- teacher as demonstrating empathy, or responsibility to other
- teaching as an ushering in of opportunity

and in this workshop context I specifically recognise the co-ordinator/conductor role - literally ‘beating time’ from the front of the room; and the ‘usher’ role - standing at the side and allowing learner voices to take over.

Facilitator as chameleon

I would extend this metaphor into a further dimension: teacher as chameleon, not only standing aside in order to usher in, but also blending in to the environment so he/she becomes part of it and no longer distinct. In **Clip 3**, for example, the teacher has disappeared and the large audience have now taken over the dialogue for themselves. They have been invited to look at two sets of sentences, and decide which is most like a 'story'. The aim of the task is to share assumptions and beliefs about story ingredients - what needs essentially to be there (eg. characters), and what is optional.(eg. suspense). They feed back the outcome of their conversation in **Clip 4**, where teacher again becomes the conductor, orchestrating responses. The roles that emanate from this sensibility, include: eliciting audience ideas, listening where their 'turns' change in length and quality, focusing on individuals in the crowd as if they were my only interlocutor and encouraging others to listen in the same way.

I am a chameleon, where members of the audience suggest an aspect I had not considered, or critique something I have done so my view of it begins to reshuffle and reformulate. In one activity, we build poems about members of the family; this is critiqued at length by a member of the audience who says: *the whole area of family is problematic for my students, because they are from broken or problematic families*. Yes, I need to reformulate so this activity can equally be about friends, teachers, pets and others; and/or I need to consider when and if it is appropriate to invite students to talk about their families. I am a chameleon where there are opportunities to learn with and from the audience. One member of the audience asks: "*What is the difference between stone and rock?*" (**See Clip 9**). And here, not quite sure where the experiment will lead, the audience and I work out the differences through metaphor: "*My father is a rock: kind? stable? strong?*" "*My father is a stone: kind? stable? strong?*" The discovery takes on a new twist, when a further member of the audience suggests that 'stone' can be positive if connected, for example, with the stone of St. Peter and the founding of the church; but then, of course, with the *translation* of the Greek into stone, rather than rock. But what was the connotation of the original?; and so the dialogue becomes a real learning journey.

Teaching as delight

A further observation on viewing the video, was the recognition of delight/wellbeing driving forward the process; the drive, possibly, which informs and explains all the others. I identify moments of delight when the audience opens up and emerges as a cluster of individuals; the nicknames of pets, teachers and librarians (**Clip 5**), poems about mothers, cousins and nieces (**Clips 7 and 8**), show of hands to show standpoint and positioning in a debate, formulation of personal myths (**Clip 10**).

There is delight, when the audience ‘leap out’ of an idea I have presented, to generate new ones of their own; the unpredictable (eg. the chain of human beings who formed a link between sky and earth in the creation myth), the unique (eg. the dog called Bombi who didn’t like being washed), the aesthetically exciting (eg. my daughter is like a shell; she is like mother of pearl).

There is delight where the size of the audience becomes an actual resource for learning: as in the task where the audience is asked to choose which of two texts are most ‘story like’. The show of hands as a result of this gives us real quantitative information about how readers perceive story, and what they see as its central ingredient. (**Clip 4**).

Teacher as conductor

The chameleon role involves sublimating the self and becoming a part of the ‘other’; being guided and led by it, changing into the other. In contrast, there were moments in the talk where the strong sense of self was in control.

- beating time and keeping a brisk pace with the audience, almost like conducting an orchestra
- co-ordinating responses after a group/pair discussion, so key points and threads are highlighted
- acting and improvising the poems and stories, being the performer
- controlling the ‘turn taking’ of the audience as a collective, by raising my hand, waiting for silence, and drawing up groundrules for finishing tasks.
- drawing threads together by returning to my own frameworks, summaries and story examples

The body language of leadership

It is interesting to notice the changing body language that accompanies each of the roles: chameleon/conductor. Sinclair suggests that body language is an essential element of leadership; through body language the leader reveals his/her style of leadership, and stresses that we should develop our “capacity to understand what is going on when people inhabit and display their bodies in organisational settings.” (Sinclair 2005: 387) As a ‘somebody’, in control of the group, responding as leader and to the audience as collective, I speak at a faster pace, almost giving myself a ‘beat’ to orchestrate my own activity. When reading the poems and modelling student examples, I exaggerate my intonation and appear to ‘play’ facially, standing at the front of the audience and in the middle. It is only in this ‘somebody’ role that I actually inhabit the central space at the front of the room. Otherwise, I am pacing from right to left, at times walking down the central aisle, and working ‘off centre’. My arms are also in almost constant activity, beating, demonstrating ‘show of hands’, holding a text, holding the microphone, turning over transparencies. Where they do not have a function, I am using my arms to sweep my hair back; a sign that I am slightly uncomfortable with this role, and have a fear of being hidden. Sweeping away hair is my own psychic reminder that I need to be fully present in order to hold my position; and the activity of the arms seems also to reflect my sense that as leader one needs to be constantly *doing*.

As a ‘chameleon’ my pace changes tangibly. I intuitively adjust the body language of control, so the learner can take over that space. Explicitly that means; periods of silence as the facilitator, a direct focus of attention on the speaker so they are not discouraged by glazing over, disinterest, a sense of being hurried or being silently judged. When the audience are working on their task, I seem to act as if I wish physically to disappear: moving backwards away from the group rather than into the group. When they are speaking to me, telling a story or raising a point, I hold eye contact with them for surprisingly long periods of time, without a restless anxiety about ‘what the rest of the class are doing’. Similarly, it is at these moments, when hearing their responses, that there seems to be most delight in my role, most manifestation of the ‘transformation’ I am aiming for.

The architecture of the talk:

Although there is a shuttling between *chameleon/conductor*, the reality is that every stage, its purpose, its time scale, and its desired outcomes, have in fact been planned. I aim for participants to experience both the unpredictability of a journey somewhere new, combined with the safety of knowing the journey has been expertly planned.

In parallel, as facilitator I aim to plan the journey with a clear sense of direction and purpose; but giving opportunity for participants to take us on a cycle of diversions, to select where the stations are and what sites we discover en route.

The planned journey/unplanned journey are built up through a series of cycles:

- presenting an idea
- experimenting with it in practice, the audience now in control
- eliciting responses, with a shared control between audience: facilitator
- returning to the primary idea with the additional layers now provided by the audience
- adding a new slant to these ideas by opening into the next point, when the cycle begins again.

Since these cycles are accumulative, it also means that more audience contributions are included at each stage, until the final activity, where I aimed to elicit a complete story from the participants' contributions: characters, their names, plots, places, and the language to describe them. (See Clip 10) This cycle leads to the final message of the talk; that learning activities which derive from our own intuitive and authentic ways of building story, are empowering. (See Clip 11). In the participants' own experience during this workshop, they have moved forward from nervous response to the opening poem, to the building of stories using their own character names, plot formations and notions of story itself.

How can evaluating and analysing this event take me forward as an educator?

The video analysis allowed me to recognise:

- The role of **delight** in driving my energies as a teacher. To take this realisation forward as enquiry, I would ask: is delight/enjoyment in the multiple roles of the teacher, central to the sustainability of a career in education? In my own case, viewing of this video made it clear to me that delight/wellbeing had indeed been the sustaining force. Evolution of other educational principles had emerged later, and only as a result of this initial drive: I like teaching. (Chapter Nine will explore this further in the context of a teacher education programme).
- To be specific about the nature of this ‘delight in teaching’, I/the teacher would also need to be able to affirm: “I appreciate and have the capacity to stand back and be absorbed and changed by my learners” (the chameleon) AND “I appreciate and have the capacity to orchestrate, monitor and control” (the conductor). In addition to this, I/the teacher would need to have the discernment to recognise which of these is needed, when, and why.
- In terms of the evolution of the book *Storybuilding*, I learnt that every task needs to take account of the unpredictable, rather than to be presented as a watertight ‘unit’ of learning; in other words, to offer starting points, rather than conclusions.

Where and how did ‘knowledge transformation’ take place, and what was my evidence for this?

The evidence I was able to identify from this event was:

- the change in audience response, from passive and non participatory, to ‘buzzing’ with energy and responsiveness, initiating highly engaged questions and offering responses to activities
- the examples of activity and story at each stage: nicknames such as Red Baron (the bad tempered librarian), Bombi (the dog who did not like being washed); myths of the beginnings of the human race (men and women on separate planets, human beings forming a chain to reach from heaven to earth), story beginnings from first lines (One day Baldilocks woke up and found he had been transformed into Rapunzel; one day Bombi woke up and

found he had been transformed into Franz Kafka); the metaphors and lines of poetry generated (my niece is a shell; she is like mother of pearl); the creative thinking that was evidenced through questions: (what is the difference between rock and stone?; could stone ever be positive?)

For me this was the very happening of ‘knowledge transformation’. We started with less than half the audience ‘admitting’ to writing for themselves of any kind: diary, journal, poetry, story. We ended with all engaged in the development of myth, metaphor and poetry, and with a revealing of the mechanisms whereby this experience could be replicated in their own classrooms.

To conclude, this chapter has aimed to illustrate the value of ***empowerment***:

- By showing how learners are encouraged to express thoughts, memories, values more clearly and powerfully through a process of exploratory/transformational creativity
- By showing learners that the processes of criticality and creativity are, and can be, connected, where content familiarity is a starting point for creative departure
- By showing the process by which my own voice as a writer became expressed in my roles as an educator and materials writer
- By exploring the process of becoming visible through the negotiation of values between validator: validated, publisher: educator.

I have also aimed to show how a process of change, or knowledge transformation, took place in educational contexts: in these specific cases, by starting with what is known by the learner, and by introducing the opportunity for, and practice of ‘linguistic adventure’ through focused practice, modelling and framing -what can be called *scaffolded creativity*. The next chapter will explore *scaffolded creativity* as a framework for learning, and consider the issues which emerge when ‘creativity’ is evaluated and judged within the academy.

Shorter/revised aspects of this chapter have been published: see Appendix Readings 20, 21 and 22

Chapter Eight

Making our stories accountable in the academy: judgement and evaluation

This chapter continues to explore the core value of **empowerment** as embedded in educational processes and choices. Chapter Seven illustrated empowerment through notions of finding a voice and acquiring visibility. Chapter Eight will extend this discussion into the processes of validity, evaluation and judgment within the academy. These processes will be explored through a project assessing the progression from critical to creative response on an undergraduate module at Oxford Brookes University. The project has some parallels with the MA Finding Voices project described in Chapter Seven: it encourages learners to recognize and value their own creativity and to see the texts of others as a springboard for generating their own. However, this chapter will focus on the assessment process and how this is part of the process of empowerment. The teaching strategy underlying this will also be explored - the strategy described in Chapter Seven as *scaffolded creativity*

A number of questions are confronted and answered in the course of exploring the assessment/teaching/creative process interrelationship. Are creativity and assessment not contradictory to one another? What notion of 'creativity' is being used here, and how is this skill or term anatomized so it makes sense to both learner and assessor? How can this assessment be assured of transparency, objectivity and meaningfulness to the learner? What can we learn about how native and non-native speakers respond to this process of transition, from critical to creative? The chapter aims to illustrate the proposition that every learner has the capacity for creativity and that assessment, far from being a constraint, can in fact be a trigger for creativity.

8.1 Creativity and language learning

Earlier chapters have explored the notion of 'creativity' from different perspectives: for example, Chapters Five, Six and Seven discussed the value of constraint and the creative potential of 'rules': notions of exploratory and transformational creativity were discussed

(Boden 2001) as well as different descriptions such as Grainger's 'passionate play', Goldberg's 'writing down the bones', and Elbow's 'throwing the clay' (Grainger et al 2005, Goldberg 1986, Elbow 1973). The notion of creativity as arising from 'something' rather than 'nothing' was discussed in Chapter Three, and as a teaching principle in Section 7.4. I also invoke my own principles of creativity as transforming knowledge-in-experience, and Pope's working definition of creativity: "to make, do or become something fresh and valuable with respect to others as well as ourselves" (Pope, 2005: xvi). These will be underlying assumptions in the discussion of assessment that follows. My own position has been to explore the nature of this capacity with reference to texts and assessment, and to unpack exactly the kinds of competence this means in practice.

See Appendix Readings 17 and 19 for earlier papers on the assessment of creative response to literature and the design of assessment tasks

Second language learning research has recognized the role of 'expressive writing' in first language learning, but been sceptical of its validity for the second language learner: "Although many L2 writers have learned successfully through (expressive writing), others may experience difficulties, as it tends to neglect the cultural backgrounds of learners, the social consequences of writing, and the purposes of communication in the real world, where writing matters." (Hyland: 2003: 10). These are concerns which, as a second language educator introducing a creative writing assessment into the curriculum, I needed to take seriously, and address with specific reference to the language learner. NOT to encourage creative processes in second language contexts seemed to me a crucial omission. Language learning, for example, cannot involve 'banking' deposits "for later retrieval during assessments." (Freire cited in Moustakim: 2007: 212). Nor is it about achieving fixed outcomes in which learning is "directed towards some fixed-end state" (Elliott cited *ibid*: 212). The problem with both of these definitions, is that the learners themselves are not processing and transforming the knowledge into 'something new', but are forced into a lockstep imitation of the teacher and a predetermined set of outcomes. This paradigm of learning, if translated into the language learning curriculum, would generate only memorised patterns and systems, rather than creative and unique applications of them. Language learning theory makes clear that the capacity to 'make

something new’ is essential to the learning process; we assimilate ‘rules’ in order to subvert them and generate unique and specific messages with them, such as Miller and Chomsky’s example “the people who called and wanted to rent your house when you go away next year are from California” (Miller and Chomsky 1963 cited in Brown 2000: 19). The speaker/listener has the capacity “to produce or understand a potentially infinite number of sentences they have not previously encountered” (Maybin and Swann 2006: 12). To explain this capacity without the notion of linguistic creativity is problematic. There are no ways in which a child might otherwise ‘learn’ all the allowable utterances in their mother tongue, since these are “astronomical” if not “infinite”. (Jenkins and Palermo cited in Brown: 2000: 19). We also know that ‘ordinary’ /everyday use of language involves ‘wordplay’, invention and creativity. Carter explores the fact that ‘creative’ use of language has a social, personal, pragmatic function and is part of our competence as language users: “creativity is basic to a wide variety of different language uses, from everyday advertising language and slogans to the most elaborated of literary texts” (Carter: 2005; 18). This includes “wordplay, puns, -- verbal ambiguities, -- sexual innuendos, word inventions” to name just a few.

Section 3.1 looked at synonyms of the word ‘to create’: *transform, formulate, generate, adapt, change, give birth to, develop, evolve, spring from, make, piece together*. If we take ‘language’ as the knowledge in question, this set of verbs looks a great deal more promising. Take this as an example:

To *transform* rules of language into meaningful utterances

To *generate* utterances which are unique to the learner’s experience

In this paradigm of learning, the learner is taking the knowledge and transforming it into something new: using the ingredients to ***make something new happen***. However, this is a broad definition, and does not offer detailed guidance for a learner attempting to engage with this as an educational objective. To be more explicit, our ‘making something new’ is contextualized within various understandings as to the nature of the ‘literary/poetic’. How is this to be defined and anatomized so it makes sense to learners? Carter identifies six features which represent ‘literariness’ and which offer criteria by which to measure

literary merit. He posits, rather than “an absolute division into literary/non-literary” texts, a “cline of literariness along which texts can be arranged”, and which form a useful framework for the assessor. (Carter 2006 : 85). These six features are: **medium dependence** (literary texts depend less on other media) (ibid: 81); **genre-mixing**; **semantic density** (the capacity for a text to work at several levels); **polysemy**, (words resonate with multiple meanings); **displaced interaction** (“meanings ... emerge indirectly and obliquely”), and finally, **text patterning**, such as the use of repetition, echoes and recurrence of motifs throughout a text.

In focusing on the ‘anatomy’ of literariness, Carter helps us with closer definitions of how we might evaluate literary creativity. But how ‘fixed’ is this cline of literary value? And how watertight will it be as an instrument for assessment? The storm of response to prizes awarded in the fields of fine art (such as the UK national art award, the Turner Prize) or literature (such as the UK Man Booker Prize), suggests that the judgment of creative output is far from transparent or easily received and understood. The values attached to creativity are time-sensitive, and judgments at each period in history are mirrors of contemporary values. Thus at different times, aesthetic judgment has, for example, honoured and discredited representation, the self as a central subject, the notion of accessibility to audience, seen memory on a cline from solid to unreliable, and seen imitation on a cline from the practice of high art to indictable dishonesty. (Pope 2005, Hunt and Sampson 2006). Assessing creativity, therefore, cannot be socially and contextually disengaged. Assessors need to be explicit about which paradigms are in place, and to unpack assumptions about what is valued and why. The next sections will trace the way we responded to these questions.

8.2 Creativity and the scaffolding of learning

We have seen in the section above that creativity is integral to how a language is learnt and used; it is thus in the interests of both learner and teacher to make sure that this capacity is allowed to flower in the classroom. But how can this be done? My suggestion is the notion of *scaffolded creativity*, in which the learner is guided through the levels of language, acquiring the skills and ingredients they need to be inventive with language.

The earliest definition of ‘scaffolding’ described a process in which the learner is enabled to “solve a problem, carry out a task, or achieve a goal which would be beyond (their) unassisted efforts.” (Bruner cited in Weissberg 2006: 248). Bruner identified the features of this ‘enabling’ as follows: parent/teacher simplifying the task, providing direction, guiding the learner towards specific features, modeling the process, and controlling frustration by “offering reassurance or a respite” (Weissberg 2006: 248). Since its first formulation, the term has come to be used in a wide range of different ways: “a framework for learning, an outline, a temporary support, a mental schema, a curriculum progression.” (Weissberg: 248). However, ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ accounts of scaffolding share the idea that learners are guided towards learning through carefully framed tasks that offer appropriate levels of challenge, based on the learners’ current starting point. Similarly, there is overall agreement that the aim of ‘scaffolding’ is to lead the learner towards self-sufficiency and the successful completion of tasks. It is in these two general ways that the term ‘scaffolding’ is used in this chapter.

In order to achieve this double role - framing tasks and guiding towards self-sufficiency - we need to be clear what levels of challenge are being demanded, and what progression through these levels will really mean. How can creative output be staged in a way that will enable a ‘scaffolded’ approach? Urban identified six developmental stages of creativity. These formed a series of developmental stepping stones from disregard of conventions and context, through imitation and replication, towards the development of an independent coherent system. The six stages he describes are: **autonomy** – in which the creation bears no relation to other stimuli; **imitation**, in which the writer simply copies texts without transformation; **concluding/completing**, in which the response is still ‘closed’ and closely connected to the original stimuli; producing thematic relations, in which theme has been ‘owned’, absorbed and transformed; and finally, **holistic responses**, in which theme and response have been developed to form a fully coherent, and independently successful text (Cropley 2001: 92). Vygotsky compares the earlier and later stages of creative maturity as creativity “which is egocentric and takes little account of the strict rules of reality or the social conventions”, in contrast to adult creativity which “combines subjective and objective elements and is thus enriched by

greater maturity and experience” (Vygotsky, cited by Cropley 2001: 91). This progression is not unique to the notion of creativity. Bloom’s taxonomy of intellectual/thinking levels also places imitation, reproduction and copying of ideas at the lower end of the spectrum, and the invention/generation of ideas at the highest level. His notion of invention/generation is also supported by the capacity to evaluate and analyse. (Bloom 1956, Vahapassi 1982, Weigle 2002).

In using the term ‘scaffolded creativity’ in this paper, I will be invoking this understanding of the progression from imitation to self-sufficiency, both as a reader and as a writer, and through the medium of tasks which model, guide, and highlight strategies.

The Context

This section will show how the scaffolding discussed above was achieved with reference to a ‘Language through Literature’ module and two generations of students that have moved through it. The module was team taught by myself and my colleague Rob Pope, and ran over 10 weeks, for 2.5 hours a week. It was offered in a range of different capacities within the University: as a module integral to an undergraduate degree with either an English Literature or an English language focus; as a freestanding module that can combine with other subjects; or as a stand-alone module forming part of an exchange visit to Oxford. Thus there was a highly mixed demography in the class, including native speaking students who arrive with a strong traditional background in critical response to literary texts, non-native speaking students whose goals are predominantly language development and cultural exchange, and students with no particular specialism in either language or literature, who are combining this module with programmes in Tourism, Business, Hotel and Catering (for example). The chapter describes a 2005/2006 cohort of 53 students, and a 2004/2005 cohort of 54. These classes comprised an average of 25% international and non-English speaking students, and 6.5% mature students (see Table 7). In every sense, then, the learners represent a challenging range of levels, agendas, proximity to literature as a field, proximity to language as a goal.

	TOTAL	Native English speakers	Non-native English speakers	Mature students (over 25)
English Literature specialists	58	56	2	6
English language/ Communication specialists	20	18	2	1
Exchange students on 1-year General Study exchanges	25	2	23	0
Other disciplines	4	4	0	0
	107	80 (74.8%)	27 (25.2%)	7 (6.5%)

Table 7: Student groups on the Language and literature module

The module guides students through a series of linguistic building blocks. In 2004 – 2005 we began with the smallest unit of language, the phoneme, working outwards to larger components as in Table 8 In response to student feedback we reversed the order in 2005/2006, starting with the largest chunks of language, whole texts, and moving back to discrete units. In both cases, the module leads the student from level to level, both from the perspective of an appreciative reader, and from the perspective of a creative writer.

1. sounds
2. words: morphology
3. connections between words: phrases
4. utterances and sentences
5. connections between sentences: cohesion
6. organization of information: coherence
7. whole texts; genres and text types

Table 8: Language Stepping Stones

To accompany the journey through language levels, students were issued with two collections of poems: one ‘long list’ for discussion and analysis in class and a second shorter collection of 12 poems, for use in the assessment cycle . Each ‘level’ made

explicit key concepts and terminology and applied these both to the appreciation of texts, and to the creation of them. Below is a summary of one of these levels, offering a ‘taste’ of how the ‘scaffold’ for appreciation and production was constructed.

Each discussion and session starts with a key question, which connects language with purpose and meaning; then explores key concepts and terminology which lead to detailed understanding of how language works at that level; then illustrates these ideas with reference to a range of poems which are deconstructed, and analysed; and, interwoven throughout, is the question – “how could I use these linguistic and poetic strategies to convey my own messages and write my own texts?”

Sound		
		Reading poems
Key question	How is sound used to convey meaning?	
Key terminology/concepts	articulation of sounds, such as plosive, fricative; the capacity of sound to convey meaning (onomatopoeia); phoneme v. grapheme patterns of sound: alliteration, , rhyme, etc.	
Analysis to creative response	Sound as meaning What actions or moods are conveyed by the sounds? How might we convey moods such as command, anger, surprise, fear, using sounds alone? Experiment with telling a story or setting a scene using sounds only.	<i>Tik, tak! Hic, hac! Tiket, taket! Tyk, tak!</i> <i>Lus, bus! Lus, das!</i> Anon: <i>The Blacksmiths</i>
	Sound:spelling relationship How does the sound:spelling link convey the poet’s message about identity and language? What is the	John Agard’s <i>Half Caste</i> <i>Explain yusef</i>

	<p>difference between the sound: spelling relationship in the two poems?</p> <p>Experiment with spellings in order to suggest dialect and idiolect. What is the effect of your spelling changes?</p>	<p><i>wha yu mean when yu say half caste</i></p> <p>Roger McGough's <i>Streemin</i> <i>Im in the bottom streme which means im not brigh</i></p>
	<p>Sound patterns:</p> <p>What is the effect of alliteration in the medieval alliterative poem <i>The Blacksmith</i>? What feelings, movements are conveyed? How are these influenced by the actual mode of articulation (plosives: voiced/unvoiced sounds)?</p> <p>Identify alliteration in today's advertising jingles and names of products; write one of your own for your own product.</p>	<p><i>The Blacksmith (Anon)</i></p> <p><i>They spitten and spraulen and spellyn many spelles: They gnawen and gnashen, they groan together.</i></p>

Table 9: Scaffolded creativity: sounds

The chart thus shows the architecture of the module, in that critical/analytical appreciation is the first part of a process leading to creative response; and linguistic concepts are explored as a stepping stone towards deepened understanding of a text and its processes. In other words, each text and language level is explored from the point of view of how it illuminates the process both of reading, and of writing. The session concerning Word level, for example, considers: affixes and suffixes, how these can influence meaning and word function, how 'new' words can be constructed through word families, morpheme changes and word compounds, the semantic properties of words and how these are influenced by linguistic environment. All these are illustrated through literary texts with particular lexical vitality: for example, John Agard's *Half-caste* and John Updike's *Superman*. Through encounter with writers' lexical experimentation, learners are invited to experiment for themselves, by generating word compounds, word families, and collocations of their own. The session on Genre follows

the same pattern, exploring the generic experiments of recipe, list, memo as poem, and the ways in which generic features are both deployed and subverted by the writer.

8.3. Assessment as a scaffold for creativity

The assessment cycle

Thus far I have shown how students on the Language through Literature module were given a linguistic/poetic scaffold with which to read and appreciate texts. This section explores the ways in which the assessment framework evolved to take account of best practice in assessment, the stages of creative maturation, the complexity of defining creativity itself, and the need to be transparent and accountable to both learners and to the academy.

The assessment involved two phases, a first formative task analyzing and responding creatively to a single poem, and a second final task involving a comparison between two texts and the creation of a third that connected in some way. A collection of 12 poems was provided for the purpose, none of which had been discussed in class. A further collection of 12 poems was provided for experimentation, discussion, and modeling of the assessment process in class. Both sets of poems could be paired in a number of ways, on the basis of theme, genre, linguistic patterns and style, form, technical qualities such as the use of metaphor. Creative response could spring out from any aspect of the stimulus text: for example, theme, pattern and form, a subversion or mixing of the genres, an extending or reworking of the central metaphor. Finally, students were asked to analyse their writing process and decisions, explaining in what ways the chosen texts had formed a springboard for their own work, and analyzing their own linguistic and thematic choices. The tasks were weighted 30% for the first task, and 70% for the second one.

We chose comparison/contrast as a starting point, since this can often focus analysis in a way that single-text discussion cannot. Contrast provides a context and incentive for detailed analysis. It is often easier to describe by negatives: to say what a poem is not, by contrast with what another is. Another reason for asking students to choose two starting points, was to illustrate the point that creation does not spring ‘ex nihilo’, that writers

themselves draw on one another and that this is a natural part of the development process; and to focus on the writer's own understanding of the difference between imitation/plagiarism, and legitimate inspiration. Two texts also provide a rich environment from which readers might identify patterns, strategies, topics and poetic ideas, and 'own' them from their own perspective.

We also believe that a reflective process of writing may lead to more generative possibilities: 'liking' or 'copying' a good idea will not be the same as understanding its origin and its components, and thus being able to own, transfer and apply them to other contexts. This combination of texts and tasks thus provides the richest possible mix of opportunities, from which something might 'trigger' an identification and ownership.

Assessment for learning

The assessment is underpinned by the notion of assessment as an opportunity for learning, self-appraisal, and focused feedback, rather than – or as well as – grading and measurement. This principle is well-founded in recent research and policy which suggest that “assessment *for* learning (as compared to assessment *of* learning) is one of the most powerful ways of improving learning and raising standards” (ARG: 2002, my italics and parenthesis.). The Assessment Reform Group found that five factors helped to achieve learning through assessment: effective feedback; active involvement of learners in their own learning; adjusting teaching to take account of assessment; recognition of the connection between assessment and motivation; the need for self-assessment and recognizing ways of improving.

Effective feedback: the mid-module formative task was designed to be a learning opportunity and preparation for the final assignment. Feedback was matched to criteria, which were honed to be increasingly explicit about the stages of creative maturity (Cropley 2001) and the perceived levels of intellectual engagement (Bloom 1956, Vahapassi 1986).

Active involvement of learners in learning; students were invited to take ownership of the themes and issues raised by the 12 classroom texts. The texts were chosen to reflect

different Englishes and the multicultural voices of writers. They also showed poets experimenting, inventing and genre-mixing. Students were invited, to engage with the meaning and form of the texts, to compare responses and issues with their own contexts and cultures, to identify themes and characters, and to develop creative responses of their own.

Adjusting teaching to take account of assessment; as a result of the formative task, a more detailed set of criteria was developed and offered as a learning/teaching tool in the second half of the semester

Recognition of the connection between assessment and motivation; the first task led to a reading of work in progress in which students benefited from hearing how peers responded to the same initial stimuli

Need for self-assessment and recognizing ways of improving: the more detailed criteria, group readings, and teacher feedback formed a framework, or ‘scaffold’, for the second final assignment. The formative task represented 30% of the whole grade, as an incentive to engage with this seriously.

In establishing principles of good practice for ‘learning through assessment’, we needed also to take account of creative ‘maturation’ : what are the different stages of ‘learning’ in this specific ‘creative’ domain, and how can these be reflected and prepared by the criteria? It was important, therefore, to take account of the creative stages discussed above (Cropley 2001, Vygotsky 1962). Imitation and close proximity to the initial stimulus are flagged as a first and less advanced response to the task; adopting and taking ownership of themes and issues as a higher level; and the capacity to generate independent free-standing texts which are complete and coherent, the highest level. A response that bears no reference to the stimulus text and does not acknowledge influences is deemed a less valued response, than the one which fully engages with the stimulus text and has an informed and critical recognition of its influences.

Establishing transparency

Finally, the assessment developed to be transparent and accountable to both learners and to the academy over three years of the module, in three ways: clarity of the rubric, clarity of criteria, congruence and appropriacy of the feedback.

Clarity of rubric

Over three years, the rubric became increasingly explicit, taking account of underlying principles, student feedback, and core beliefs about good practice.

Reference to the term ‘creative’ was deleted from the rubric and the criteria, given the assumptions and ambiguities embedded in the word

Students were explicitly informed that all texts were complete, as several students believed they were reading extracts from longer works: *Select two texts from the Poems for Assessment booklet of 12 short and complete texts.*

Students were offered a list of ways in which texts might be paired in the final assignment, and encouraged to invent their own pairings. The ‘thematic’ pairing is first in the list, as a suggestion that this can lead to a higher level of response: *The two texts might invite comparison or contrast from a range of viewpoints: theme/topic, genre, patterning, language experimentation. Students are invited to make their own combinations of texts, and justify these in their analysis.*

Students were reminded that their analysis might refer to all the levels of language discussed in class.

Compare and contrast your chosen two texts, drawing on all levels of language discussed in class to explore the similarities and differences between the message, form and meaning of the texts: sound, word, word-mixing (imagery), syntax and sentence patterns, connections between sentences (cohesion), text organization, generic features, discourse features.

Students were reminded of ‘genre-mixing’ as a high level of ‘literariness’ (Carter 2006), and encouraged to try this for themselves.

Write a third text of your own, which responds to one or both of your chosen texts. You may wish to take your cue from the aspects featured above. The result may take the form of, for example, a poem, story, dialogue or a combination of all of these and more. Be adventurous!

The components of a reflective commentary were made explicit, so teachers and students had a shared understanding of this; thus encouraging the stages of analysis and evaluation (Bloom 1956) and the acknowledgement of context and conventions (Vygotsky's objective creativity).

Go on to add a reflective commentary in which you discuss your own writing process: how the initial text(s) influenced you; how you changed and developed it/them; which strategies and features you deployed; and how successful you feel you have been in achieving your aims.

Clarity of criteria; clarity of feedback

As criteria became fine-tuned and more precise, they formed a framework for collective feedback to the cohort as a whole. Criteria evolved in two phases. At first, we formulated a broad-based set of points, which connected with the maturation stages of creativity described above, and also with the programme as a whole.

Content

- The rubric made known to students under this category, guides them towards the development of independent, holistic and 'medium independent' texts
- *Understanding of key principles and strategies for exploring and experimenting with texts*
- *Ability to apply these principles independently and critically*
- *Ability to use linguistic terms and techniques accurately and appropriately*
- *Ability to respond to texts creatively as well as critically, and to reflect upon your own writing processes.*

Presentation

The rubric here ensures learners' work is firmly embedded within the conventions of the academic writing community; thus that they are capable of an 'objective' creativity which references itself to the outside world.

- *Clarity and coherence of writing, including clear and effective layout*
- *Accurate and complete referencing of sources*
- *Adherence to the given word limits*

The first formative assignment provided a learning opportunity for both students and teachers as assessors. We, Rob Pope and myself, were able to analyse our own responses, our own values and expectations concerning what we were looking for in a ‘critical’ response, and what we meant by a ‘creative’ response. The notion of creativity specifically came to mean: ‘ownership’ of themes and message, ‘saying something new’, personalized and authentic and being aware of the strategies and techniques for doing so. Mechanical experimentation, dependency on others, paraphrase or ‘borrowing’ of the themes or issues read about elsewhere, were all judged by the two assessors as outside good practice. The reflective process of creativity was also made explicit; that the writer be aware of the way he/she is conveying messages, and the way sources have informed and inspired the text. Specifically, these ‘ways’ might be interpreted as linguistic, thematic, poetic, artistic. This could also involve reversing, echoing, personalizing, transforming what has been read; direct ‘borrowing’ would lie outside the scope of creative good practice, unless this ‘borrowing’ were to comment, reverse or embed into a different setting. As a result of this evolved understanding, the following guidelines were generated, with which to interpret and unpack the core criteria.

Creative response

These were some of the ways you responded creatively:

- *mechanical playing with the language of the original*
- *replying to the original*
- *changing the genre of the original: eg. poem to email, letter, monologue, personal ad, story*
- *staying close to the original but manipulating some of the language*
- *reversing the theme/message of the original: eg. positive to negative (eg. love to hate, praise to blame)*

All of these were excellent, but those which were ONLY about mechanical manipulation tended to do the following:

- *not fully engage with the meaning and message of the poem*
- *not involve your own thoughts, beliefs, ideas*

*So next time, try and write something that is saying something important to you. Try and include **yourself** in your creative response. The best assignments did do this.*

Critical response

Take care to use terminology and vocabulary precisely and only when you fully understand their meaning. Some words have an 'everyday'/secular meaning, and a very specific one when used in a linguistic context. Take care that you use these words precisely, as appropriate to the genre of academic discourse and linguistic analysis. Here are some examples. Check their meanings in a linguistic context.

- *simple*
- *complex*
- *genre (connect this with the notion of **text type**)*
- *appropriate (use this instead of **correct/incorrect** language)*
- *colloquial (use this instead of **casual** language)*
- *formal/informal (check your understanding of the term **register**)*
- *present, past and future tense: these are incomplete descriptions. Remember that we also need ASPECT in order to describe a tense fully.*

Take care to connect linguistic features with meaning.

When you discuss a linguistic feature, remember to show:

- *what effect this might have on the reader*
- *what meaning this conveys*
- *what you think the writer's intention or message might have been.*

Thus far we have shown how the assessment framework took account of models of creative intelligence, literariness and assessment for learning; and how rubric and criteria were honed to reflect both underlying principles and evolving experiences. Having considered researcher, assessor and teacher perspectives, we need to turn now to the responses of the learners themselves.

8.4. Students crossing the bridge: appreciative reader to reflective writer

The assessment cycle, and the formative opportunities offered before final submission, yielded work with a high quality of engagement and personal investment. As an overview of responses, pairings which were based on theme/topic were the most popular. Pairings on the basis of experimentation with form were chosen by very few across the two cohorts.. The most popular 'pairings' included: theme/topic (eg. Louise Bennett and John Agard – see below), the two praise poems, a Dinka poem to the bull, and praise to the Behemoth in the Book of Job, patterning (for example, Kit Wright and Miroslav Holub both use repetitive sentence patterns as an echo or refrain), language experimentation

(for example e e cummings and Edwin Morgan experiment with punctuation, invented word compounds, onomopoeic constructed words).

Students in the highest band of success engaged with themes, rather than attempted to stay close to the surface features of the original. Below are examples of thematic development from a number of different ‘pairings’ in the assessment collection.

Pairing choice 1: John Agard: *Oxford Don*, and Louise Bennett: *Colonisation in Reverse*

This was one of the most popular choices. Students identified several shared themes, some highly politicised such as coloniser/colonised, insider/outsider, oppressor/oppressed, public language/private language, unemployment. Others responded more personally, with, for example, personal responses to place, work and status.

Jeanne connected the issue of colonisation in the poems, with her own story of immigration and her dual nationality.

I felt concerned by the themes presented in these poems: colonisation: because Ghana where my parents are from was part of the British Empire and immigration because my parents immigrated to France. (...) Being the daughter of immigrants, you experience the feeling you are in between. I’m not completely French but I am not completely Ghanian. (So) -- I have integrated the first sentence of the Ghanian national anthem – and the first sentence of the French national anthem (into my poem).

Ghana is my homeland
But
I am also a daughter of France.

– ‘but’ is isolated to show the ambiguity I feel when it comes to explaining where I am from.

Camille focused on the idea of speakers absorbing mainstream languages in order to assimilate. She explored the idea of language speakers influencing one another and generating a mutually meaningful code.

The ideas that interested me most (...) were that a minority language could usurp and influence a widely accepted form of speech, and that language itself could be infectious. At first I considered writing a poem or story using an

invented language or way of speaking. I also thought of languages that have been used as a form of control (George Orwell's *newspeak* and secret, defiant languages, like Nushu: a Chinese language spoken only by women. --- I decided, however, that I wanted to write something where the minority in question is just one person, rather than a whole race ---

A sketch follows, of a girl who speaks her own 'other-language', which is gradually adopted by everyone around her.

Iris drew from the two poems the theme of employment/unemployment. She also recognised the contemporary power of the poems, relating them to the Labour government's 2006 restriction on Jamaican entry into the UK.

Tony Blair is a very hard man ...
Him say 'inna Englan Jamaican don' belong' ...
De only immigrant him want is illegal one

Pairing choice 2: Kit Wright: *The Magic Box* and Miroslav Holub: *The Door*

Both these poems had surface parallels: repeated sentence patterns, a refrain-like repetition, a surreal dream-like quality created by the crossover of abstract/concrete meanings. Wright's magic box contains the uncontainable; Holub's door opens onto the intangible. These poems led naturally towards dreams, hopes and memories.

Katrin explains in her commentary that the Wright poem "allowed me to think that I wish I had this box in my life, or well could change my life in some way. I kept the same structure and tried to follow this theme."

Marie generated a 'dreamlike' poem that echoed the patterns and repetitions of the two chosen poems. The main connecting theme was, as with Katrin, the resonance between poem and personal experience. "My rewrite is based on my personal experience of being abroad, leaving my boyfriend for nine months."

You put in my hand
A spoon of the softest Saharan sand
A piece of iceberg powdered with snowflakes
And a cloud full of rain, smooth and warm.

Pairing choice 3: Dinka praise poem, *My Magnificent Bull* and *O Behemoth* (Book of Job).

Both poems build up praise of the animal through a series of powerful hyperbolic metaphors, and do so with a repetition of sentence patterns that give them an oral, incantatory quality. The students who chose this pairing tended to remain with the praise of animals, rather than, for example, subverting the genre into a ‘flitting’ or hate-poem, or extending praise to people, objects, places or settings.

Elisa responded to the incantatory prayer-like qualities of the poems by evolving a ‘praise/prayer’ to the Elephant, using words from her childhood language, Welsh.

Just as ‘O Elephant’ uses ‘ajanaku’, the Nigerian word for elephant, I thought I would give the Welsh words for God - ‘Du’, thank you – ‘diolch’: and Jesus – Iesu. (...) Also ‘sing my song’ refers to the fact that I am a singer but suffer quite a lot with nerves and praying gives me confidence that solos will go well.
(Elisa)

8.5 Marking the journey: tutor feedback

How easy was it to place these personally engaged responses within a framework of measurement and assessment? Clearly, the assessment framework was strongly criterion-referenced, and the clarification of language levels, and objectives within these, made the knowledge base explicit. The shared values as to the nature of the ‘good’ creative task had been made explicit, and these were used as a yardstick against which to measure our responses, and moderate one another’s, during the feedback and assessment phase.

Scorer reliability

During the marking we ensured that the following criteria were met:

- The two pieces of work written by each student were each marked by a different assessor.
- The two assessors standardised their marking by opening the marking process with 3 shared assessments, and closing it similarly by co-marking 3.
- Wide differences in grading of an individual student across the two assignments were second marked. (ie. A difference of one band up or down)
- Distinctive cases were second marked: ie borderlines, distinctions and fails, as well as a sampling of students at the top, middle and bottom of the range.

With a shared understanding of objectives at each language level, and how these were to be applied to personal ‘voice’, we found there was rarely a discrepancy of more than 5% in a response to an individual piece of work.

Critical feedback

The complete cohort feedback was examined after the marking process was complete, and a checklist identified of comments which appeared repeatedly or seemed characteristic of a lower assessment band. These comments fell into two clear groups: comments about language analysis, and comments about the creative process and clarity of reflection. Typical criticisms about the language analysis, found repeatedly in the assignments marked 55% or below included:

- Lack of precision
- Inaccuracy when describing linguistic features
- Inaccurate use of terminology
- Omission of core features in the published text, such as tone
- Value-laden, judgemental responses
- Inaccuracy in writing conventions,
- Gaps in the discussion (e.g. unsubstantiated generalisations).
- Misreading of the published text:

Typical criticisms about the student’s creative response included: .

- Mechanical response to the published text, such as manipulation of language without addressing meaning
- Remaining too close to the original
- Lack of authenticity and not exhibiting ownership of the theme. :

Similarly, comments which emerged as characteristic of higher assessment bands offered insights into what was valued by the assessors. Positive feedback about language analysis found repeatedly with assignments marked 65% and above included:

- Using dialogue/varied voices to excellent effect to explore meanings
- Providing good explanations of terminology and core values, and applying these to the texts.

- Revealing full awareness of the relationship between the original and the new text and of the influences of the original.

Positive feedback about the student's creative response included:

- Transforming the original text into something new, lively and interesting
- Authenticity and engagement with content.
- Using strategies meaningfully to convey message

In engaging with the criteria and applying this to actual student responses, several new questions emerged. Our initial assumption was that a choice of texts would offer a stimulus and support for creativity. However, students in the lower categories used these texts to imitate and manipulate, and did not spring out into any production of their own. Why? Are we wrong, perhaps, in believing that appreciation of other texts is an important starting point and springboard for creativity? What is the 'threshold level' which is needed, for this process to work? At the opposite end of the spectrum were students who responded zealously to the list of 'literary' and poetic features and reconstructed them fulsomely in their response. Yet the texts with the highest number of examples of 'literariness', were not necessarily also the most successful. How to explain and define this? Do other judgments override notions of successful 'literariness'? If so, what are these? Authenticity, integrity, engagement might be starting points for answering this. Yet this leads to a third question: powerful personal engagement with the topic was not enough to be valued highly. In fact, in some cases, this powerful engagement actually led to weaker, *less* highly valued outcomes. Why? What are we learning here about the balance between an ego-centred creativity versus one that is 'adult' and publicly accountable? What is emerging about how these are valued, and how they interface with 'literariness'?

8.6. Analysing results

Table 10 illustrates the following quantitative dimensions of the students' results:

- The relationship between formative and final assessments
- The number of students whose results were in the top band (70% and over)

- The number of students who were in the bottom band (52% or under: borderline failure or fail)

	TOTAL	Native speakers *	Non-native * speakers
Students who improved by one grade/band between the two assignments	35 (33%)	28 (34%)	7 (29%)
Students who dropped one grade/band between the two assignments	20 (19%)	15 (18%)	5 (20%)
Students whose final grade was over 70%	18 (17%)	10 (12%)	8 (33%)
Students whose final grade was 52% or under	11 (10%)	8 (10%)	3 (12%)
Total Student numbers 2005/2006	107	83 (78%)	24 (22%)

* Percentages in these boxes are based on the native speaker/non-native speaker sub-totals.

Table 10: Overview of Student Achievement in the Language through Literature Module

Table 10 enables us to answer several interesting questions. Firstly, did our criteria for critical: creative response become more transparent to the students? 33% of students did improve between one assignment and the next, and amongst these, were just under one third of the international students and one third of the native speaker students. This suggests some progress which could be attributed to increased understanding of the task. A smaller percentage (19%) actually dropped a grade, with little significant difference between native and non-native English speakers. Again, reasons for this are merely speculative, but could suggest a difficulty in responding to the critical: creative challenge as its demands grew more explicit. In measurable terms, only 1 in 10 were assessed as failing in the process of transition from formative to final assignment: nearly one fifth were thought by both assessors to have been highly successful; another third made significant progress between the first and second assessment. These results do indicate that the formative stage had indeed provided a structure for development; that our concept of 'creative response' became more fully transparent to the learners so that we shared an understanding by the time we reached the final assessment

Secondly, were non-native speakers advantaged or disadvantaged in any way by the nature of the assignment? The table shows that the non-native speakers were significantly represented in the top band of achievement: 8 out of 18 first class results were non-native speakers. Their first languages included: Spanish, Italian, French, Polish, German. Amongst the native-speakers, 2 were bilingual French/English, Punjabi/English. Even more interesting is the fact that nearly one third of the non-native speaker group achieved at this highest level. Thus, far from arriving at the view that non-native speakers might be disadvantaged in comparison with native-speaking literature students, it seems that the experience of language learning and knowledge of a second language were significant factors in success. Those learners who had accessed English through the metalanguage of grammatical and linguistic descriptions, were distinctly advantaged. Similarly, those students with experience of a second culture were more able to extract broader public and political themes from the chosen texts, and to engage with them personally.

Thirdly, was there any pattern amongst the students who struggled most in ‘crossing the bridge’ from appreciative reader to reflective writer? The figures suggest that the challenge of transition was similar for the NS and the NNS (10% and 12% respectively). What is apparent from analysis of the feedback, is that the causes for failure were identical in both cases: either inaccuracy at the appreciation or analysis stage, or lack of engagement and authenticity at the creative response stage. The ‘non-nativeness’ was not significant at this level, compared to the highest achieving group, where a bicultural/bilingual experience actually appeared to contribute to success.

8.7 Intertwining teaching and assessment: scaffolded creativity

We shall now return to the questions posed in the opening section of this paper, and respond to them in the light of what has been discussed so far.

Are creativity and assessment not contradictory to one another?

This case study showed that an assessment exercise can also be an opportunity and an incentive for creativity. Students specifically praised the assessment cycle as the reason

they enjoyed and benefited from the module. The early, formative stage offered the opportunity to understand better the difference between dependence and ownership; it allowed an opportunity for tutors to hone their definition of a 'creative' task, and students the opportunity to experiment with the relationship between critical and creative response. Thus, in the end, assessment provided an incentive and a 'scaffold' from which creativity could emerge.

What notion of 'creativity' is being used here, and how is this skill or term anatomized so it makes sense to both learner and assessor?

We have seen that models of creative stages, of 'literariness' and of everyday linguistic creativity helped to shape the notion of creativity used in this assessment profile.

What emerged from the cycle of teaching, feedback, analysis, assessment, is that there are indeed shared values and shared definitions of the term 'creativity', although even these are not without their complexities. 'Making something new' works well as a broad definition; however, the 'new' clearly needs to take account of the 'old' as well as the 'current'. Specifically, the 'something new' most highly valued is informed by peers and precedents; a generative 'something new' that involves the learner in appreciating texts more fully and being more confident in responding to them in their own voice.

How can this assessment be assured of transparency, objectivity and meaningfulness to the learner?

The transparency was established by 'thinking aloud' in the formative stage: What values about the creative:critical relationship are emerging from our formative comments? The linguistic/poetic scaffold upon which the course was framed became the framework too for evaluation: has this 'scaffold' been understood by the appreciative reader, and applied by the reflective writer? Results suggest that, in 90% of cases, this progression from appreciation to writing was achieved, and in 33% of cases, the more detailed criteria helped students to improve between first and second assignments. Some aspects of the framework are still open to question: how do we account for the 'accumulation' of literary features which do not necessarily add up to literary quality? Whilst advocating personal engagement in the topic, how do we account for the personally engaged texts

which are in fact weaker because of this? The values by which we judge need to be continually re-examined, especially so where our declared values appear to be subverted by later judgements.

What can we learn about how native and non-native speakers respond to this process of transition, from critical to creative?

Student and marker feedback suggest that an accurate understanding of language systems and a receptiveness towards language creativity assist the process of transition towards reflective writing. Learners with experience of more than one language and culture seemed to be advantaged in having a higher likelihood of this openness. Providing a reflective framework on which to build, seemed to be helpful for the majority of the students, who were able to use this to ‘cross the bridge’ into creative production. Establishing a shared explanation for ‘creative production’ also assisted the process.

To summarise, the module did justify our belief that the creative process is accessible to learners across a wide spectrum of backgrounds, language levels and interests, and that providing linguistic and reflective tools allows for greater creative risks and opportunities. Making these ‘tools’ explicit and placing them within an assessment framework appears to have enhanced the process, at least for the majority.

We have seen the skepticism attached to the notion of creative writing in a second language, and the complexity of issues that need to be addressed in order to do this responsibly. However, to be focused on this only is to lose sight of what is different and important about ‘expressive’ as opposed to functional and transactional writing. “The making of art enables individuals to ratchet up their ephemeral lives to the level of high symbolic adventure and philosophical questing” (Abbs: 2003: 7). This opportunity to ‘make art’ generates deep learning and active engagement. In a broader sense, this assessment cycle and its outcomes provide further justification that ‘making something new’ should be recognized as achievable, measurable and central to our notion of meaningful learning.

This chapter has explored the impact of assessment on the learning and creative process in the context of an undergraduate programme. It also aimed to show how assessment can

actually empower and facilitate learning. The next chapter also considers empowerment as an educational principle, but in the context of teacher education. It engages, as this chapter does, with the ways in which assessment and deep learning are intertwined, and interprets *knowledge transformation* as a process of teacher development leading to real and tangible change in teacher practice.

Students cited in this chapter have given permission for their words to be used. All names are pseudonyms. A shorter version of this chapter is in the process of publication: Spiro, J. (forthcoming) in L. Sercu and A. Paran.

Chapter Nine Teacher stories: teaching to change

This chapter continues the exploration of *empowerment* as an educational principle, and offers a further perspective on the notion that “deep learning leads to change of both the learner and what is learnt”. Whilst Chapters Seven and Eight explored this process with reference to students on language and literature programmes, this chapter explores ‘transformation’ with reference to teachers developing their practice. The chapter returns to the notion suggested in the opening chapter, that “action research is grounded in the story-teller” (McNiff, Whitehead and Laidlaw: 1992: 7) and explores the role of teacher stories in developing both a sense of self and a sense of community.

The chapter draws on two projects developed between 2002 - 2006, both with in-service practising teachers on a Diploma/MA programme in language teacher development at Oxford Brookes University.

- 9.1 describes the evolution of an action research assessment cycle in which teachers set up and evaluate their own process of change.. As with Chapter Eight, it considers the intertwining of assessment, teaching and deep learning.
- 9.2 describes a project in which teachers build a distance learning community through sharing stories and arriving at a shared statement of core values.

9.1 Teaching as learning: action research as a change agent

The questions which structure this section (as with the opening chapter of this thesis) were suggested by Whitehead and McNiff (2006; McNiff and Whitehead 2005).

9.1.1 What is my concern?

In 2001 I became course leader of an in-service teacher development programme. Although the teachers were highly experienced, and worked in a wide range of teaching contexts worldwide, the teaching assignment prescribed at the time paralleled almost exactly initial teacher training schedules, with a top-down approach to evaluation involving detailed checklists of prescribed standards. These were modelled on the Cambridge University DELTA guidelines (Diploma in English Language Teaching to

Adults) - a ‘one size fits all’ yardstick of excellence that addresses ‘ideal scenario’ classes. My concern was that this assignment was not finely-tuned to the many contexts in which these teachers worked. Nor was their considerable experience and expertise being recognised, to generate meaningful and relevant criteria of their own. More broadly, I was concerned that what was offered to the teacher were *criteria* “in the form of checklists which enumerate competencies, and which can be ticked off” (Whitehead and McNiff 2006: 82) rather than *standards of judgement*, the opportunity to “root their work in what they hold really important.” (ibid).

9.1.2 Why was I concerned?

In addition, I felt the assignment was not congruent with the mission of the programme, to develop reflective and independent teachers in sustainable cycles of self-development. On the contrary, the assignment seemed disconnected with the notion of development, allowing very little scope for the teacher to be independent or to determine their own values. In most cases, criteria was based on externally visible evidence that could be identified within a single lesson: rather than across a sequence of learning and teaching. Discrete classroom skills (such as elicitation and correcting error) were weighted equally, on a lesson by lesson basis, with more fundamental long-term qualities (such as responding to student needs, establishing rapport and creating an effective learning environment). My concern was that ‘bad work’ was being done, in Kincheloe’s sense:

One of the most important aspects of teacher education might involve the study of the processes by which teachers acquire the practical knowledge, the artistry that makes them more or less effective as professionals. When such inquiry is pushed into a critical dimension, teacher educators address the process of how professional consciousness is formed, how ideology contributes to the teachers’ definition of self. Without such inquiry and analysis, teachers remain technicians, and teaching remains bad work. (Kincheloe 2003: 38)

9.1.3 What experiences can I describe to show why I am concerned?

As specific evidence that the assessment might be generating ‘bad work’, was the fact that, in the first year of the programme before my arrival, no students had completed the

Diploma. From a cohort of 12 students, only half were active; the others had become demotivated, inactive, were persistently missing assignment deadlines, or were being referred for resubmission. Some teachers had worked successfully in the classroom for years: successful, in that they felt learner expectations had been understood and met, and that these matched what was understood culturally and within the institution: yet some of these teachers were failing, according to the criteria established as yardsticks.

Other teachers were adopting these paradigms, and as observed from their teaching videos, these were simply not appropriate in their contexts. In this sense, they were meeting everything required of them objectively: and yet, in real terms, this was not meaningful in their own contexts.

Changes needed urgently to be made in order for the programme to be viable, not only financially, but also ethically and pedagogically.

9.1.4 How do I explain what has influenced my educational decisions?

I arrived at an alternative philosophy and practice of assessment, through a series of reasoned and grounded observations:

- the notion of ‘research’ in this module needed to be radically revisited, and replaced by an action research cycle in which student/teachers could formulate their own standards of judgement, and develop their own emerging theories. In other words, “it allows people the flexibility to make up their own story as they go along.” (McNiff, Whitehead and Laidlaw 1992: 7).

- to ‘make up their own story’, the assessment needed to embrace fully the nature of reflective practice: the cycles of look/act/think (Stringer 1999) which might emerge in any order and with any number of iterations. Teachers needed to be given permission to learn without limit, both *in* action, and *on* action (Schon 1986), be free to observe their own classrooms both from a reflective distance and from actual engagement, without limit to what is noticed. (Pollard 2002)

- grounded life histories provide examples of experienced teachers’ frustration with protocol, audits, prescribed criteria: (Bell 1995; Thomas 1995, Day et al 2007, Munro 1998). Teacher narratives such as Appel (1995) in Germany, Aoki et al (2004) in Japan,

Doecke, Homer and Nixon (2003) in Australia, show the formative and transformational value of teachers exploring their own classroom realities in order to derive living theory which genuinely informs and supports them. Such journeys have found legitimacy in the academy and offer rich insights for other educators: (Cahill 2007, Roche 2007, Delong 2002, Naidoo 2005).

- criteria founded on Westernised assumptions simply do not transfer into other contexts. (Holliday 1994). Strategies such as rote learning, reading aloud, dictation, translation, silence are judged negatively in western paradigms, yet have quite different educational value in other cultures (Cortazzi 2000, 2006; Kirkpatrick 2002, 2007a and b).

Establishing personalised, finely-tuned criteria is a starting point for teachers to take ownership of their own improvement, as do Ma Hong and Gong Lixia in Chinese classrooms (McNiff and Whitehead 2005: 77 - 85).

-counselling theory also revealed that our expectations of learner fulfilment are based on westernised assumptions that may not be shared: (Lago and Thompson 1997). For example, the role of male and female fulfilment is very differently circumscribed in a Hindu or Islamic culture, and the price for transgression very high. Nafisi (2004) gives us one example of how differently the genders might experience access to intellectual opportunity, and the social/political responsibilities this places on the teacher.

9.1.5 What did I do about my concerns?

Drawing on the belief that “How do I improve my practice” can only be answered in ways that are culturally, politically and personally meaningful, I evolved the following assessment cycle.

The cycle opens with an intuitive and non-assessed diary entry exploring personal beliefs, in order to offer the teachers a starting point for their reflections. In the course of their development, they revisit these beliefs, deepen them, deconstruct them, recognise where they are and are not behaving in congruence with them

Stage One: Diary notes at the start of term:

Beliefs

Note down four important beliefs you have about teaching. In each case, say why you hold this belief, and note down ways in which you try and act on these beliefs in your classroom.

. Stage Two: Teaching assignment

The stage two action research cycle broadly mirrors the four stages of reflection suggested by Kolb (Kolb 1984). The assignment describes a spiralling back to reflective observation, but as suggested above, the cycle might move in any order through any number of iterations of look/act/think processes.

concrete experience: *Teach and record one ‘typical’ lesson with a class of your choice.*

reflective observation: *View your lesson recording and identify at least 3 areas which you would like to explore, improve or reconsider, as a result of your observation. You may ask a colleague to view the video with you and also make suggestions.*

abstract generalisation: *Select ONE of these areas, and draw up an action plan of how you would like to change or improve. Use the diary notes you made in week one, notes from this module, background reading, observations, and discussions with colleagues, to gather suggestions for improvements.*

active experimentation. *Plan and teach a second lesson in which you try to implement changes and points from your action plan.*

reflective observation: *Write a report/self-reflection, in which you compare your first and your second lesson; describe and explain your chosen field for change, the ways you worked on this, and how you feel you have changed as a result. You may like to include, also, any further reflections you have about the beliefs you explored in week one.*

The task descriptors are deliberately broad in order for teachers to tell their own story in relation to each. For example, teachers can interpret as they wish the phrase ‘typical lesson’ at phase 1. They are given the option of sharing the observation stage with a colleague, and to determine what is meant by an ‘*area* you would like to explore’. This could “vary from their own practice, their understanding of that practice, or the situation in which their practice is located” (McNiff et al 1992: 4). The wording does not presuppose any one of these.

This is not to say that their research cycle is unsupported. In the Assignment handbook under Frequently Asked Questions, each of the phases are described and deconstructed, to make them achievable, meaningful, and non-threatening. For example:

How do I know which issue to choose? Choose something which you can change. For example, you might observe that your students do not like the coursebook you are using. If you ***can*** choose another coursebook, or use different materials, your question might be: how do I and my students respond differently when I use my own/new/different materials in the classroom? If you ***cannot*** change the coursebook, your question might be: how can I make the coursebook more motivating and interesting for my learners?

The importance of realistic targets is advocated by Kemmis and McTaggart (1982), and is a crucial consideration in the question: what can I change - and why should I change it?

9.1.6 What kind of data have I gathered to show the situation as it unfolds?

The data shared in this section includes both teacher and trainer (myself) responses to this newly formulated assignment.

Twenty in-service teachers were registered between 2002 - 2005 for the Diploma in ELT. These twenty included the 12 from the early cohort, absorbed into the new assessment cycle, so it is possible to trace the difference in their progress from the first year to the second. The demography of the group, as represented in the table below, shows the wide range of teacher contexts and cultures, L1 and connection with their learners' L1. What they all have in common, is that they combined part-time study at Oxford Brookes with teaching, at a 100% distance from the host institution. The recordings were posted to me as the assessor, so feedback and all interaction was 'virtual'. In some cases, students were working in pairs on the same diploma study, but mostly they were working individually, supported wherever possible by colleagues in their institutions. This support was encouraged and specifically framed in the task, and the role of peers in the change process became part of the discovery generated by this data.

Category	Data from 20 Diploma teachers 2002 - 2005	Comments
Countries in which teachers live/work	Brazil, Mexico, Argentina Egypt, Turkey, Korea, Japan, Estonia, Poland, Spain, Belgium, Italy, France	Two students working together in Belgium. Two students working together in Japan. Otherwise students are all working individually.
Teaching contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State primary school • After-school private classes: primary level • State secondary school • After-school private classes: secondary level • Adults in private language schools • Adults in in-company classes • One-to-one language tutorials 	Class sizes range from 40+ in state secondary schools, to one student in home tutorials.
L1 of teacher /L1 of learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English native speakers who have knowledge of the learners' L1 • English native speakers who do not have knowledge of the learners' L1 • Teachers for whom English is an L2, who share an L1 with learners • Teachers for whom English is an L2 who do not share an L1 with learners 	<p>Eg. Bilingual English/Italian teacher teaching Italian children</p> <p>Eg. English L1 teachers in Korea, Japan and Turkey</p> <p>Eg. L1 Spanish teacher teaching Mexican Spanish-speaking children</p> <p>Eg. German L1 teacher of English working in an Egyptian language school with Arabic speakers</p>

Table 11: Overview of teachers on the Diploma in ELT programme 2002 - 2005

9.1.7 What are the issues teachers identified as important, and on what basis did they do so?

In viewing their first lessons, teachers identified issues such as the following:

1. *I noticed in the first lesson that I always answer my own questions. I never **give students time to answer**. I'd like to improve the way I ask questions, and respond to answers.*
2. *I was amazed to realise that I only talk to the front row of the class. I completely miss out the quiet ones at the back. Next time, I want to see myself moving all round the class, **addressing and including everyone**.*
3. *I am all the time **insisting on grammatical accuracy** and they keep making the same mistakes. I need to think again about whether this is important and what to do instead.*
4. *I always try to follow my lesson plan even if it isn't working. I thought that's what I was meant to do. Even while I'm doing, I can hear myself thinking, "what shall I do, just **go with what they want or go with what I've planned**"?*
5. *My students are not interested in English, I know. I want to help them see that **English can really improve their chances in life**.*

Through the reflective process, the beliefs which underpinned these concerns emerged, either explicitly or implicitly.

Issue 1: Why should I **give students time to answer**?

In this case, the teacher expressed a core belief that his role as teacher was to 'bring out the potential' in students. In viewing his lesson, he experienced shock and dis-ease that his behaviour was not congruent with this.

It is a puzzle, the conundrum being how the best bring out the potential that the learner undoubtedly possesses. For two and a half years to the present time I have been a student of such a subject.

(Kieron: Turkish primary school: LI not shared with the students)

Issue 2: Why should I **move round the class, addressing and including everyone**?

In this case, the teacher identified as a core belief, the importance of sensitivity and responsiveness to her learners.

One of my strengths is the good rapport with my students. I listen to my students' needs and take their questions seriously. I show respect and sensitivity for their traditional, religious and cultural

background and avoid intimidating situations or the use of inappropriate material.

(Monika: Egyptian adult evening class: L1 not shared with the learners)

Observing her own teaching, she became aware she was not always acting on this belief but at times missed out the quieter women at the sides and back of the class, who traditionally deferred to the men before speaking out. To expect them to speak out in a large group may have been culturally unlikely, but moving round the class gave them the possibility of talking to her in a less exposed way.

Issue 3: Why do I keep *insisting on grammatical accuracy*, and what could/should I do instead?

Several teachers made points connected with grammatical accuracy, and their relationship with error. The action research cycle gave them courage to review their practice, explore the reasons for their attachment to accuracy, and the reasons why this wasn't working for their learners. In the process of this reflection, two teachers made radical changes to their practice and to their learners' experience:

I was teaching the way I had learned to teach. I had taken it upon myself to chisel my students' minds with grammar, vocabulary, and other information. Now I look forward to the next class, where my role is not that of a craftsman but of facilitator. I used to repeat patterns to teach them to students in a very controlled practice, now I let my students experiment with the language, to use it with a purpose. They feel so good with themselves that they have established a rule of the classroom. If we use Spanish we have to pay a fine, this goes into the community pot and we will use it to throw a party at the end of the school year.

(Eduardo: Mexican secondary school: shares L1 Spanish with learners).

As a result of my readings and professional studies, I have ceased to insist on grammatical accuracy during my lessons. Since accuracy is a late acquired skill, it is of little use to blindly insist on it during a 30-hour course. As a consequence, I no longer correct missing "s". I do not insist on the Present Perfect, although I am ready to explain it with examples on request. These include asking my students to think about the meaning of: I am married. I was married. I have been married. Remarkably, the majority of student seems to understand without these explanations.

(Jacqui: in-company small tutorial groups in France: L1 shared with learners)

Issue 4: How can I make a choice between *going with what they want and going with what I planned?*

A number of teachers also chose to focus on their relationship with the lesson plan. The encouragement to reflect ‘in action’ - mid-session and whilst engaged with the learners, gave them new insights into the value of the pre-planned lesson. One teacher made the decision to plan using much broader categories, and discard the detail she had adopted since her initial training: blackboard plans, sample questions, and expected homework outcomes.

It is not always possible to plan the individual class in detail because you never know what problems arise, what questions are asked and what topics are developed.

(Irene: one-to-one business tutorials in Belgium: L1 shared with the learners)

Issue 5: *I want to help them see that English can really improve their chances in life.*

Two teachers in the cohort focused on the lack of motivation of their learners and extrinsic aspects of their experience: the role of English in the community, the socio-economic situation of the learners, and the pressure from parents to succeed in English exams. One teacher chose to stay with the belief that she could change this world for her learners. Kemmis and McTaggart (1982) might have predicted that this teacher would be disappointed in her efforts.

The subject belongs to a very poor family who cannot even afford the school uniform she has to wear or the photocopies of the English coursebook. English is only present in class; not even in the town or in the nearby cities. Therefore she does not pay attention to English and see the use of the target language rather far from her reality.

(Liliana: Argentinian primary school: shares L1)

I would like to tell you that people in this town are very, very poor. Sometimes I see myself as a social worker rather than a teacher of English. Sometimes I pay them their breakfast at the school cafeteria because their parents cannot afford it. (Liliana: Argentina primary school)

After some struggles, this teacher was unable to find an achievable way in which she could have an impact on her learners in a way that she valued, and she dropped out of the programme.

The second teacher struggled with an achievable response to his concern, but came to the view that

To lower these filters, **we must incorporate activities that have communications as a goal.**

His action plan included observing his colleagues in search of games, activities, conversations and topics which ‘lowered anxieties’, and to notice when and where and how the learners seemed to be ‘enjoying their studies’.

9.1.8 What insights and implications can be derived from the data?

Insight 1: What did I learn about the assessment process through this data?

The chart below records the ways in which the new assessment impacted on the first cohort of 12. It shows that the process had a tangible impact on progress for 8 out of 12 in the group: 2 borderline students passed and graduated with Diploma (Row 1), 2 students who had not completed earlier assignments, completed this one (Row 2), and 4 middle range students passed the module with distinction (Row 3).

Table 12: The impact of the action research cycle on student progress

Positive impact: numbers	Description of the impact	Comments
2	2 students who had failed or resubmitted earlier assignments: passed the action research module and graduated with a Diploma within a year	One of these students said in his evaluation: I believe that for a considerable amount of time I could describe myself and my teaching as the following: “a case of feeling that everything is fine and you are simply ‘coasting’ through your work, doing it reasonably successfully, with reasonably happy learners, but you are in a rut of some kind.” -----I honestly feel that I have taken the first few steps away from that rut.
2	2 students who had been inactive and missed deadlines on former assignments completed this module. After completion they withdrew from the course. One student failed the module.	Both students reported pressure from work as their reason for dropping out. However, their self-evaluations say that the

		action plan assignment had changed their practice for the better.
4	4 students who had passed former modules with pass grades, completed this assignment with distinction.	
1: no impact	1 student: there were no changes to her grade and she graduated with a pass at Diploma level.	
3: no impact	3 students who had been inactive for long periods dropped out of the programme.	Typical reasons for dropout were: moving to a new job, work pressure, change in life style (new baby).

The students were also required to write self-evaluations of their work on this assessment; all considered that the action research cycle had changed their practice or perception in some way. Whatever their assessed grade along the spectrum from distinction to borderline pass, the recorded lessons each showed palpable change between the first and the second lesson. The freedom to interpret terminology, and select from the range of possible fields of interest, was helpful for the majority of students who were prepared to engage fully in the process. Most, too, connected the cycle of change more and more explicitly with the beliefs they had identified in the opening task. The students who passed in the distinction category, were those who connected tangible change in behaviour, with clarity about their guiding values.

Insight 2: What did I learn about the difference between assessment through ‘criteria’ and assessment through ‘standards of judgement’ evolved through lived and embodied values?

What emerged through studying the data, was a huge discrepancy between criteria-based judgments, and the core values which emerged from the teachers, and were the standards by which they wished to be judged. The chart below shares a sample of these differences. The right hand column lists the criteria built into the earlier assessment schedule and derived from Cambridge University DELTA checklists. The left hand column contrasts this with the issues and values that mattered most to the teacher: the values beside which they chose to be judged. The chart reveals that the ‘criteria’ focuses on the visible and measurable; the teacher values focus on what cannot be perceived in a single ‘snapshot’ observation; and yet which represent the heart of what teachers considered to be important.

Criteria-related evaluation (Exam Boards)	Evaluation based on embodied values (teachers)
<p>Demonstration of professional standards and knowledge areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidence and clarity in sharing content <p>Overt learner responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether learning goals are achievable Whether tasks are achievable What students have learnt at the end of the lesson Effective materials/well-prepared resources/good use of resources good planning: well-organised clear objectives <p>Teacher qualities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‘Rapport’: good interaction between teachers and learners <p>Revealed through strategies such as using students’ names</p>	<p>Sensitivity to issues which are publicly revealed such as:</p> <p>Freshness and immediacy of the content areas: (excitement/enthusiasm/freshness)</p> <p>Sense that learners are actually learning, through specific indicators such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of verbal responses Laughter and enthusiasm Body language (yawns, slumped in chair, looking out of window) <p>Creativity/autonomy/ownership of the content and methods</p> <p>Handling planned actions flexibly in order to be responsive to emerging situations</p> <p>Sensitivity to issues which are not publicly revealed to the observer such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> teacher’s implicit role teacher’s prior knowledge of class attitudes and responses teacher’s knowledge of information extrinsic to the classroom: eg the role of the L2 politically and socially learner expectations learners’ previous and current learning experience cultural attitudes to learning the socio-economic context of the learners sensitivity to the learners’ attitude to English sensitivity to the institutional role of English

Table 13: Differences between criteria-related judgements and teacher values

Insight 3: What did I learn about the catalysts for change in a teachers' practice?

The data also revealed turning points which had created change in the teachers' practice and perception. These turning points could be plotted on a spectrum from **discomfort** to **excitement/delight**. Both extremes of the spectrum tended to generate change of some kind; the discomfort for example, of experiencing incongruity between beliefs and behaviour, or the conflict between personal values and institutional ones. At the other extreme, was the excitement/delight of experiencing new ideas, arriving at new insights, seeing self and learners positively change. The teachers' points of change ranged from moments of despair to moments of revelation. The chart summarises teacher voice in response to each catalyst of change.

Catalyst of change	Examples from the teachers' stories: Why do I need to change?	from DISCOMFORT
Critical incidents	Devastating student feedback: "The feedback absolutely floored me. I had no idea the students felt like that."	to
Incongruity with personal beliefs:	"I thought I was a learner-centred teacher until I saw myself teach. I hardly let the students get a word in."	
Unease	"I don't know why things just don't seem to work with this class in the way they do with others" "The subject matter just feels really airy. I don't know what I'm teaching."	
Tiredness	"This is the fifth year I've run this course and I wanted it to feel fresh. I have to keep reminding myself that it is new for the students, so it needs to remain new and fresh for me too."	
Responding to new developments in institutional practice	"I see it like this. Something is happening and I'd rather be part of it than see the boat passing me by."	
Influence of new ideas/approaches/peer support	Conferences, colleagues, students, new resources "in teaching it appears that we often	

Influence of new ideas/approaches/peer support	need others – advisers, observers etc. to help us see the noses upon our faces!”	DELIGHT
New insights	“It was remarkable to realise the students understood without detailed grammatical explanations”.	
Experiencing the positive effects of a new approach	“Now I look forward to the next class, where my role is not that of a craftsman but of facilitator.”	

Table 14: Catalysts of change and teacher voices

This section recounted a mirrored action research cycle. Whilst the students were following their own cycle of action research, theirs formed part of my overarching research, investigating assessment in teacher education. Whilst their task was to discover personal values and their impact on classroom behaviour, my task was to connect their stories and generate an understanding of their collective experience. Their changed behaviour happened in the classroom between teacher and learner: my changed behaviour happened in terms of the refinement and fuller understanding of how teachers learn best, and how I as teacher educator can frame and evaluate that learning.

9.2 Sharing teacher stories

Section 9.1 looked at individual development in classrooms, and personal processes of transformation. It revealed how personal narratives helped teachers recognise and become more congruent with their own core beliefs. I described above how I was able to generate a collective understanding of the teacher experience, from my vantage point of assessor.

This section focuses on a project between September - December 2006 that sprang out of the first one. By giving the teachers a similar opportunity to compare narratives, it occurred to me that I was offering them the same rich possibilities of seeing their values and concerns manifested by others in different contexts and settings.

Section 2.1 suggested several reasons why ‘connecting stories’ are powerful vehicles for understanding of self in connection with others:

- individual stories have political/public implications (Elbaz 1992, Wright Mills C. in Bullough and Pinnegar 2001)
- part of social engagement is to see commonalities in plurality (Lippmann in Magonet 2003)
- personal stories engage with, and reflect, personal values (Bullough and Pinnegar 2001)
- personal values have most strength and validity when revealed in response to others (Buber 1998)

This project was introduced through the medium of WebCT, a shared space exclusive to this teaching community, in which messages could be posted visible to the whole group. The group were twenty two teachers embarked on a teacher development programme leading to either an MA or Diploma. The group were divided into four groups, with five or six in each group. The groups had had time, through other activities, to ‘meet’ one another, form their own connections, and give themselves a name and group identity.

The project moves, pyramid-like, from diversity of voice, to a ‘single point’ or consensus. The first stage acknowledges the diversity of the learner community by inviting learners to share stories of ‘critical incidents’ in their teaching careers.

Share a narrative about a critical incident or key moment in your career as a teacher.

The second stage invited students to read one another’s narratives and **identify common ground**; this could involve the recognition of shared experiences, concerns, beliefs, values, approaches, goals.

Review each others' stories and, as a group, identify what you consider to be key themes, issues, shared concerns and questions that emerge.

Critical incidents and teacher stories

The teachers at this stage, shared stories of desperate first lessons conducted before and without the help of training or mentoring: perfectly planned lessons disrupted by monsoon rains hammering on the roof, an observer leaping in and ‘giving advice’,

carefully sorted handouts flying round the room in the gust of a fan; of battles with unteachable coursebooks or artificial and meaningless tests; of ‘students from hell’ who were disruptive, sceptical, bullying or dominating; of battles with school authorities for recognition, put-downs from family, bosses, colleagues or students about professional status.

Below are examples of two critical incidents:

1) The devastating impact of one negative student on the class atmosphere

I asked the students to read through the text silently first before reading it aloud and discussing unfamiliar vocabulary. After reading through the text silently, B noticed that there was an inconsistency in spelling in the text. I really don't remember what the word was, but I think it was a word written in BE (*British English*) in the title and AE (*American English*) in the article. I do acknowledge that there was some kind of inconsistency that should have been corrected before passing out the text to the students. Nevertheless, B said he was unhappy about the quality of the material the school was using. He reprimanded me (and in extrapolation the school, too) for using a faulty text. I found his tone and choice of words very rude and unfortunately, I reacted personally to his attack. I felt personally offended by his complaint. This caused me to freeze up and become very distant and formal, not only to Bernd but to the rest of the group as well.

So the whole relaxed and friendly atmosphere we had had was gone in an instant and caused by only one student.

In-company teaching in Germany

2. Lesson plan dries up and task loses direction

My relaxed and composed demeanour vanished in a puff of smoke by the time I reached group C. Two minutes into the task and they had already finished what had taken the groups in the previous lesson almost 15 minutes to negotiate. In what B Kumaravadivelu (1997) would describe as “a strategic mismatch” the students had simply used the minimal language that they could in order to complete the task. My instructions to get them to justify their choices seemed to be rather superfluous in some respects. Surely the task could no longer be considered to be authentic if I was now asking them to re-discuss the decisions they had already made?

Secondary School in Tai Wan

Formulating shared values

In the second stage, **identify what you consider to be key themes, issues, shared concerns and questions**, teachers extrapolated from one another overlaps, connections and resonances: recurring themes with context-specific examples. The postings below reveal these different stages of negotiation, exercises in connection and empathy.

Posting 1 to the group from Parveen

Hello Everyone

Some of the common themes that came out in our group discussion were:

- Believing in our self: A common theme which has emerged within the group reflective task is to believe in ourselves and to take risks. All of us have mentioned about trying out new things in complicated situations. The situations mentioned are:
Situation: To remove monotony from the classroom. Action: Involving and encouraging students to do activities.(Haroon)
Situation: To teach English conversation classes. Action: by allowing students to practice English in small groups though the class became noisier but still the result was successful.

(Mark)

Situation: To teach small groups when used to teaching in large classes Action: by understanding individual differences and demands of individual students.(Parveen)

- The diverse attitudes of L2 learners to native speakers. It emerges out that there are always more expectations from native speakers.(Mark)
- The diversity of teaching English in different situations and different countries:

Experiences that were included were from India, Pakistan, Thailand and UK.

(Haroon,Mark and Parveen)

Posting 2 from Steve

1) Search for legitimacy and respect: from students, within the institution, and in the wider community.

2) Search for professional excellence, through syllabus design, quality lessons and appropriate relationships with our students.

3) Teaching as a calling rather than a profession.

4) 'Teaching paradigm's', the theories concerning how to teach effectively and how these affect the way that we teach. What is the nature of the relationship between the paradigm and the practice?

5) The unpredictable affects of culture. It is generally accepted students from different cultures approach language learning from different perspectives. Few individual students are unaffected by the cultural background within which they have developed as a language learner. As a result, we need to treat the different cultural backgrounds within which we work on a case by case basis.

6) Teacher authority and responsibility

For Ed this is a matter a discipline, where to draw the line, how to maintain authority.

For Steven it is the interpretation/intentions dichotomy. If the students are learning in a broadly similar manner than expected then perhaps the class can be described as disciplined.

For Miruna it is evident in her self-motivation and independence) Miruna is motivated as a teacher by her ability to provide the “full service” from syllabus design to the effective delivery of her own material.

Posting 3 from Mark

I have looked through what has been written so far and come up with some possible common themes -

- The important contribution of our own learning experiences to our teaching
- Different attitudes of L2 learners to native speakers
- Different teaching/learning situations exist in different countries/cultures/institutions
- Teachers need to be flexible and take risks to make the most of different/new/difficult teaching situations

We all

- share the difficulty of reconciling previous experience or personal ideology with the realities of a different teaching context.
- search for legitimacy and respect: from students, within the institution, and in the wider community.
- see teaching as a calling rather than a profession.
- desire to be responsible for the teaching experience, in order to be professionally fulfilled: we all need the scope to be creative in order to fully deploy our skills and express our values as professionals
- strive to meet student needs, using whatever resources, teaching paradigms or ideologies work best. Student needs come before any current orthodoxy.

It is clear that the shared values emerged as a powerful political statement about the position of the teacher in general, and the English language teacher in particular. Many felt the English language teacher did, indeed, have particular injustices and pressures to deal with: short contracts, inferior working conditions, disregard by bosses and colleagues. However, in most of the postings, the **delight** of teaching

emerged as a driving force in the teachers' choice of career. This came to be the overarching value behind all the others: we care about what we do and we consider it to be worthwhile.

Please see Appendix Readings 25, 25 and 26 for short articles and poster presentation related to this section.

9.3 Teacher stories as knowledge transformation

This chapter has looked at the relevance of teachers' stories on their development, both personal and collective. We have seen that critical incidents - the moments of discomfort and un-ease, can in fact be turning points in a teachers' learning; and that telling the story of these critical incidents can reveal to the teacher his/her core beliefs. These are the moments when "teaching becomes learning", offering generative principles for change based on deep learning (Sotto 1994). We have also seen how much can be learnt from comparing and sharing these critical incidents: high and low points cut through specificity and reveal experiences which can be universally understood. For these insights to be truly relevant, we have also seen that some kind of change needs to take place - change in perception or behaviour.

The next section, dealing with my move into management within the academy, takes account of these insights. Chapters Ten and Eleven deal with two critical incidents of my own, both catalysts for change and turning points in my own development. Chapter Eleven returns to the insights gathered in this chapter about how teachers learn, and explores how these insights informed me in my new position as Head of Applied Linguistics focused on the professional development of my team.

Section D I as creative manager

How does knowledge transformation manifest itself in my practice as a creative manager? How have I found connections between creative writer: creative educator: creative manager roles?

Chapter Ten

Story as crisis: critical incidents in the higher academy

The sustainability of vision

Authenticity

*I am only prepared to act through (my core) beliefs, rather than through desire for power, status, recognition, or fashion. I regard my own authenticity as acting always in congruence with these beliefs, and **wherever they are compromised or threatened I will seek repair and resolution, however hard-earned these might be.***

Well being

I have a responsibility to preserve my own well-being, so my actions are fuelled by an energy which is capable of recharging itself, rather than by a negative and draining energy. It is only in this way, that creative responses can continue to be sustained.

This chapter explores a critical incident that forms part of my story as a teacher, and deconstructs my responses to it as a creative writer and as an educator. Chapter Nine explored ways in which critical incidents formed a catalyst for change in teachers' lives, while Chapter Ten considers my own 'un-ease' when personal beliefs were under threat. The critical incident took place in 2000 when I was 'selected' for redundancy from a team of twenty, along with one other colleague, after eight years of employment. The incident impacted on the health of the team as a whole, and involved major repositioning of self in relation to the institution. The chapter uses the methodology of concurrent evidence to tell the story: diary, letters, memos, poems and personal notes written between February and July 2000, following the example of Whitehead (1993). It also draws on various analyses of the 'critical incident', including Tripp (1993) and Vasilyuk (1991). In exploring this incident, I am also focused on the ways in which it was possible to sustain wellbeing in a situation which was unsustainable; and how it was possible both to survive and be transformed by crisis and the experience of dis-ease.

Critical incidents can be interpreted in a number of ways. Chapter Nine explored 'critical incidents' in the sense researched and defined by Tripp (1993) as the

interpretation of any event as significant. (Tripp 1993: 8). It is “professional judgement” which determines whether or not an event carries profound implications and could be the stimulus for change. The capacity to identify significance and respond to it has been seen as a key factor in the development of reflective practice. Griffin’s research (2003) revealed that critical incident analysis amongst pre-service teacher trainees “increased the degree of -- orientation toward growth and inquiry.” (Griffin 2003: 207). Specifically, interpreting the significance of classroom incidents developed the three attributes of reflectivity defined by Dewey: “open-mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness”. (Dewey cited by Griffin: 207) The teacher stories in Chapter Nine were further examples of reflectivity being enhanced by the interpretation of classroom events.

This chapter will explore a second, and ‘strong’ definition of critical incident as “any event that is unexpected, acute, stressful and exceeds the normal coping capacities of individuals” (FEAP University of Virginia 2006). In this sense, the critical incident I will describe lies outside what one might ‘normally’ expect in a working life as a teacher, career-changing events such as redundancy, restructuring, privatisation . Chapter Eleven explores examples of the latter two from the perspective of a manager; this chapter explores redundancy from the perspective of an employee.

Vasilyuk describes two ways in which crises of these kinds can be resolved:

One is the restoration of the life disrupted by the crisis, its rebirth; the other is its transformation into a life essentially different (Vasilyuk 1991: 118) .

However disruptive and dysfunctional the crisis, Vasilyuk defines it as an opportunity

To act on the basis of (my) value system, to actualise and affirm it, to act upon it under conditions which practically and materially operate against it. (ibid: 140)

The critical incident I describe shows the ‘survivor’ response to attempt ‘restoration’ as a first resort, and to reluctantly and slowly accept the need for transformation into ‘a life essentially different’.

As a model for the strategy I use, I have been influenced by Whitehead's account of his battles with the established academic community, both as a researcher and as an educator (Whitehead 1993). This revealed to me:

- the potency of original documents – letters, memos, meeting minutes – in telling the story of institutional attitudes
- the educator's experience of paradox when his/her own deeply revealed values are rendered invisible or unacceptable by the academy
- the importance of confronting negative experience, and of rejecting all inclinations to sanitise this or to suggest easy resolutions

10.1 Redundancy as paradox

In this story my own paradox is this: literary creativity is the thing that defines and distinguishes me as an educator: literary creativity is the thing that makes me a misfit as an educator.

The academic establishment makes different, ever changing demands at each stage of our contact with it: student, scholar, teacher, manager: and the institution as a result seems never to be something that can be fully known. In addition there are specific difficulties women experience as the dispreferred gender in higher education, making their positioning as leader all the more complex (Marshall 1984, Munro 1998) :

The styles typical of women and men both make sense given the context in which they were learned, but they have very different consequences in the workplace. In order to avoid being put in the one-down position, many men have developed strategies for making sure they get the one-up position instead, and this results in ways of talking that serve them well when it comes to hiring and promotion. ---- Women are more likely to speak in styles that are less effective in getting recognized and promoted. But if they speak in the styles that are effective when used by men – being assertive, sounding sure of themselves, talking up what they have done to make sure they get credit for it – they run the risk that everyone runs if they do not fit their culture's expectations for appropriate behaviour: they will not be liked and may even be seen as having psychological problems. (Tannen 2001: 40)

This complexity is in evidence in the story of redundancy. It begins with a happy and successful period of seven years as a Senior Lecturer in a working environment that, at my level (with little contact with Senior Management), was optimal: the range and

quality of teaching and travel opportunities, relationships with my colleagues and students, and the physical environment itself, including a view of the sea from my office window. I was editor of an international research journal, *Reading English as a Foreign Language*, was running a creative project for Malaysian students (as described in Chapter Seven), course leading degree courses in Mexico and the Netherlands, and presenting programmes for local television (as described in Chapter Six). I had had little occasion to encounter Senior Management since the day of my interview, apart from occasional official letters attached to the monthly payslip. This had never worried me: on the contrary, it seemed to be a lucky opportunity to do the work I most valued alongside those who most valued it. The only hint of potential trouble, was that my work was not permanent. Not only was it on a rolling 3-year contract, I had also been required to sign, as part of the contract, an agreement to waive all redundancy rights. In spite of this, I had made a complete commitment to Devon, the community where we lived, and this institution where I worked. It was the place, too, where I met my husband, and where we bought the house which was the first in a lifetime of travel, that felt like home.

10.2 Falling down the pothole: telling the story as it unfolds

Event 1

July 1999: Letter is received 6 weeks before the end of a 3-year contract, informing me that my contract has now been extended for one year only, with all waiver clauses intact.

Immediately on receipt of the letter, I enquire whether the letter has been sent to me individually, to selective members of staff or to all of us. I am confirmed that all staff with contracts ending in August 1999 received the letter.

Event 2

October 1999: Staff meeting: staff express concern that the extension letters were sent without consultation or discussion. Management express the position that there will not be work for everyone after August 2000. We raise the point that we would be prepared to consider flexible contracts and other ways of sharing the work reduction.

Event 3

December 1999: Meeting with line manager, who expresses concern that my literature area of work has declined, thus making my post vulnerable. I emphasise the point that I am currently course leader of 4 other areas, none of which involve Literature and all of which are scheduled for the next academic year. I also point out

other areas in which I would like to participate and develop, such as PhD supervision and distance learning provision.

Event 4

Jan. 11th 2000: Management present at the staff meeting reiterate the position that there will be a reduction in work. They are not able to say how much reduction there will be. We repeat that as a team we are prepared to spread the work, and take reductions in our full-time contracts in order to avoid redundancies.

Event 5

Feb. 1st 2000: Meeting with NATFHE, who to date have not been approached by management or been made aware of any problem within the group.

Event 6

Feb. 22nd 2000: One course of which I am leader (CELTA) is cancelled without warning, through a short memo. I see the Dean who informs me the course is not cost-effective. I discuss with him ideas and initiatives I have formulated for international involvement in the mooted Arts Centre, but I am informed that none of these are viable.

I then raise with the Dean the problem of projected redundancies, and offer to make suggestions for redeployment and skills transferable to other departments. He does not wish to pursue this discussion.

Feb. 26th

Alexander Technique lesson in honey sunlight, and I feel palpably happy – working on creative writing project- a week off mid-term in which I am writing proposals for the *Creative Poetry Writing* project, and planning a conference presentation in March based on ideas from the project. Jumping into the car, I close the door hard against the back of my head, and am stunned by the shock, literally see stars, feel concussed all weekend.

March 1st

John at Art College, writing in March sunlight, dustbins being collected, postman rings the doorbell with a registered letter.

Feb. 29th 2000

CESSATION OF YOUR FIXED-TERM CONTRACT; 31st August 2000

I am sorry to be writing this letter which is to confirm that your contract will not be renewed following its cessation on 31st August 2000.

This decision follows the Dean's consultative meeting with staff on 11 January 2000 and his present best estimate of the level of potential work in the area for which you were originally contracted for. (sic)

We should be happy to discuss the steps that we have taken and intend to take – including the continued search for possible opportunities elsewhere in the College – between now and your contract end date.

Unfortunately, our considerations at this stage do not suggest that natural wastage, recruitment moratorium elsewhere, reduction in part-time recruitment, job transfer, job retraining and/or contract adjustment are sufficiently viable options to remedy the position.

I am scalded, I want to leap into icy water to relieve the burns, but nothing relieves them, I run into the street to find relief and I am running like a hurt animal who cannot speak or scream or understand where the burns come from.

I phone the Principal but am referred to the Assistant Principal: phone the Assistant Principal but am referred to Personnel: phone my line manager but he is in a meeting and doesn't call back.. No-one will talk to me. I have been melted out.

March 2nd

Phone around and find out if I am the only one. If not, who else? Yes, one more person: a colleague, one year from retirement, snatched from a dignified departure by a whisker. Two women deemed to 'go quietly'; one because she is about to retire, the other because she has been flexible, conciliatory and loyal throughout a seven-year career. It is clear at this level where the thinking lies. The men who had heckled in staff meetings, sent aggressive memos to the deans, and threatened to contact the press, seem to have been invited in to the protected circle. The women, who expect justice to be done without loudly claiming it, have been deemed invisible.

March 3rd

Alexander Technique lesson early morning prepares me for the first day back in.

I felt the blow physically, in the stomach, solar plexus and heart. It was literally difficult to breathe for the first hour after the letter arrived.

I arrived for the lesson with a sense of palpable pain that literally ungrounded me. It was difficult to conceive of having the physical strength to face the day. What the teacher did, through a gentle process of non-intervention, was to draw out the resilience that had somehow moved into a panicked retreat: and through a process simply of gentle presence, coaxing it back into place. I experienced it as a movement of warmth, not externally, but from my own inner capacities: and then, literally, a 'filling up' of the places that had been emptied.

By the end of the lesson, the sense of being 'refilled' had become almost visceral in quality. Having felt like an animal that had been savaged, I now felt I could stand up again with a

sense of almost red-blooded courage. I had a sense of the heat which my own body was capable of generating, and the enormous instinct it had to heal itself.

What also happened in this process, was that the pain which I had internalised, moved out of this non-verbal physical space, and instead became a focused, precise anger which I was able to articulate solidly and effectively.

The process I have described continued over a period of months and helped me to gradually transform my situation. I can imagine no other kind of support which could have been so effective. None of the rational words of support from friends, family and colleagues helped, because it was not here that I had suffered the greater wound.

I went in feeling strong, fighting, angry, liberated by rejection. I see my line manager and let my pain flow: the betrayal, the strong sense of THEIR loss, how much less they will be. I feel that, it has goaded me into self-esteem. Talk to Personnel. She has a box of Kleenex ready for me: but tears are far away. Instead, I feel an icy precision. How did it happen? who made the decision? What was the criteria? What about the pieces left behind, the lights that will go out with me, the projects unfinished? Everyone is sympathetic but managerial, allowing me no room for grievance, taking care to let nothing slip about rights, conditions of service, appeal procedures, union support. I know all of these are somewhere, but I am too numb to find them. No-one can say: Why me? No-one seems to know.

Event 8

I write to the Assistant Principal, listing my skills and responsibilities in the past 7 years, again enquiring as to why I have been selected for redundancy amongst 8 possible contenders. The point is repeated, that the area for which I was originally employed in 1993, had diminished.

March 3rd:

*To: the Principal, Deputy Principal, Dean, Deputy Dean and Personnel
cc. NATFHE*

I understand that a Skills Audit was drawn up to assess the future needs of INTEC, and match them to staff skills. It appears that this Skills Audit was used to identify me for redundancy.

My view is that this assessment must have been based on a limited view of my skills. I have worked on every course, at every level, and with every degree of responsibility.

I know that the team, and myself individually, would have been happy to provide management with a breakdown of our skills, and recent experience on which to base their judgements. We were not asked to do so.

*I feel strongly that the decision to select me for redundancy is both unclear and unfair. In 1993, it is true, there was a verbal agreement that literature would be part of my job. This was never formally written into my letter of appointment or into my contract: nor was it ever assumed that this would be my **only** role. I have always offered everything that other staff offered, with literature **in addition**.*

I feel that it is my right after seven years of service, commitment and loyalty to the college, to know on what basis I have been selected for redundancy. Nobody has spoken to me who is prepared to take responsibility for this decision. The only information I have been able to deduce, is that this additional skill has been assumed to be my only one; that my other skills have been either overlooked or dismissed.

I enclose overleaf an outline of skills deployed in my work since 1993, and would like to know in what ways these were taken into consideration when my case was reviewed.

(A list of 12 areas of competency and experience is then listed)

March 6th

On March 6th I receive a bland reply to my message, simply rehearsing again the tired and tinny old arguments. None of my specific points or questions have been answered: because they cannot be. Even the bad grammar was the same as in the original letter. No-one had dared to do any more thinking at all.

CESSATION OF YOUR FIXED-TERM CONTRACT; August 2000

Thank you for your memorandum of 3 March 2000.

My letter to you of 29 February 2000 stated that the principal reason for the Dean's decision was that there was insufficient work available to sustain the continuation of your contract following his assessment of the estimated level of potential work for which you were originally contracted for. (sic)

Event 9

In frustration at receiving no clear explanation for selection criteria, and no debate with management about the redeployment of our skills, the other ‘selected’ colleague and myself send the Dean a letter.

It is not quite the way I feel at the moment, or the way I would do it, but near enough, and we need to support each other now. It is a record of her emotional state at that point: whereas it is clear to me we do not need to operate from an emotional standpoint, since all the indicators of clarity, fairness and justice are in our favour simply by recounting facts. However, we both sign it, send it cc’d to all senior managers, hold our breath for the reaction.

March 6th 2000

We wish to convey our extreme anger and hurt at the way our Non-Renewal of Contract notice was handled. We feel betrayed, humiliated and demoralised in a way that is difficult to express adequately. We feel that the decision should have been relayed to us by a member of the management team, before the letters were sent out. The decisions should have been explained and the reasons given as to why we were targeted for non-renewal out of the possible nine people involved. At least it would have given us time to prepare ourselves to deal both with the shock and horror (our own and other people’s) that the decision has generated.

This is all the more surprising in a College that prides itself on practising Christian values and which has also gained an Investors in People award recently. It does not augur well for the future of International Education in this College, that the leadership seems to lack the moral courage required to deal with a situation such as this, particularly one that is in no way a reflection on the quality of our work.

March 9th

Colleagues are now beginning to organise themselves into a response. This has taken a few days – because the way the news was communicated has meant the information has taken a while to circulate; and because the response of disbelief has been, at least at first, paralysing.

The first response is from the co-ordinator of my research group to the Dean.

I understand that the College has informed Jane Spiro that her contract will not be renewed later this year. I guess decisions concerning redundancies are taken by the line managers of individual colleagues and that, consequently, you have not been involved in this. However, few of us contribute to just one area of the work of the College and the loss of an individual may have repercussions in other areas of our activity. I think it is important that you should be aware of Jane's efforts and her possible inclusion in our next RAE submission. Jane is very active in publishing and presenting at international conferences. She has been engaged in writing a book, of which RG has spoken very highly in Research Committees -----. Jane has also acted as consultant adviser to local television programmes. I append to this a list of her most recent publications.

It seems very sad that (the college) cannot find work for a colleague with Jane's experience and interests. It is also sad and perhaps meaningful that our collaborative activity to promote the institution's national and international profile and contribute to RAE submissions is undermined by decisions that appear to be based on a rather narrow interpretation of a person's contribution. I am sure that you would agree that if we are ever to develop a scholarly, research oriented culture at (the college) we would need to nurture the enthusiasm of colleagues like Jane. If you are able to do anything to find other areas within the College in which Jane is able to deploy her undoubted talents then I am sure it will contribute towards our endeavours to maintain and raise the quality of teaching, research and scholarship.

On the same day, we receive a brief note from the Dean on his return from abroad.

Dear S. and Jane

Thank you for your joint letter on the 'Non-Renewal of Contract', which was waiting for me today on my return from Malaysia. I think there may be some misunderstanding of the process and my role and responsibility in it and would be happy to meet you together, or separately, to explain what I understand at this stage may have happened.

March 11th

Meanwhile the department are doing the same – a more measured corporate expression of shock, and all are involved, everyone.

Dear B.

We are writing this letter to complain about the discourteous and unprofessional handling of the recent dismissals which has had a profound effect on morale in the department as a whole.

Firstly, we are concerned about the total absence of consultation. In the letters received by those whose contracts were terminated, reference was made to 'consultation' with staff at the meeting of 11th January 2000. In fact, no such consultation took place. As the minutes of this meeting clearly indicate, staff were merely informed of the need for redundancies and were assured that consultation would take place. This did not happen. To our knowledge, there has been no attempt whatsoever to discuss matters with any of the staff involved, and the procedures outlined in the Staff Handbook have not been followed.

Secondly, the lack of transparency causes further concern. We would like to know what procedures were used to select staff for redundancy, and to emphasise that whatever the criteria and process used, these should be fair and seen to be fair. Staff are well aware of the need to restructure the department to meet the changing conditions in international education. We would willingly have given our full support and co-operation in working together towards this end. Instead, we have been excluded from the process and not informed about issues that profoundly affect all our careers.

A third concern is the way in which the decisions were communicated to those involved. Notifying staff by letter without any prior discussion with management appears to us to be out of step with current best employment practice and also the College status as an 'Investor in People'.

To address all of these concerns we request an urgent review of the situation, with all available staff of INTEC, to take place within the next two weeks.

Finally, we put on record our appreciation of our colleagues, SP and Jane Spiro, for the invaluable contribution they make to INTEC, for their hard work, commitment and support of others.

The letter is signed by all staff, both academic and secretarial.

I am fierce now, in pursuit of work. There IS work: I WILL be wanted. I am shameless – pull the Dean of Humanities out of the lunch queue to talk work: and now I am touting myself round the college selling my wares – linguistics, literature, education, drama, tea lady, landlady. Anything. I will be wanted. Most of all, I will be known.

Now the world is divided into two people: people who will fight and support, sign petitions, set up petitions, stand up at meetings, hammer the table at union meetings, threaten to strike: and those who will not. Some people let their neighbours melt away: some will not. But ultimately I know more than ever that this is like death: you are in it alone.

The union are soft: they stick to the managerial line. They almost share each other's lines. Not once has the word 'redundancy' been used officially. They dare not, of course, because our case fits none of the definitions of redundancy. Our courses, our students, our projects are ongoing, and will need to be either cancelled or picked up by others when we leave. It is clear a case of redundancy could easily be exposed at a tribunal, and Personnel, the union within the college, and all the college management, are at pains to deflect us from this. No, we are simply casual workers whose contract has come to an end.

I am on the edge of the raft, clinging on. Some people are trying to pull me back: but some are trying to prise off my fingers as I cling to the edge. I am trying to climb on, desperately, because everything I want is on the raft.

The Reject Shop

I am returning the enclosed.
It was too long
too short too big too small
too tight too loose
the wrong colour
shape size cut texture fabric fit
disliked by my lover daughter neighbour dean doctor
dog dentist psychic counsellor.

I ordered
two by mistake.
It was used
soiled surplus to requirements
no longer required
not in line with company requirements.
The garment contract
confirms the garment status as
reusable recyclable unusable
reducible collapsible removable
to dispose of
quietly
after use

March 13th

Today we speak to the Dean, in response to his message. It is our first dialogue, since the letter that expelled us. We go downstairs, feeling like we are the wronged ones, we have the monopoly on injustice, and that commiseration is the least that could happen.

Event 11

Our first (and only) meeting with the Dean focuses on his response to our letter. None of our questions and concerns are referred to or addressed. Instead, we are told the letter is libellous and defamatory, and we are to retract it in writing or be prepared for legal action against us.

This further twist is too stunning to quite believe. We agree to do nothing until he does. In spite of this, I contact a lawyer friend and find out precisely what my legal position is.

Practising Present Perfect

You have sunk my ship
Your ship has sunk me

You have broken my castle
Your castle has broken me

My ship is sunk.
My castle is broken.

March 13th – 17th

At all costs I wish to stay in Devon, in the home we have newly bought and loved, the hills and Dart valley, poetry circles and book club, place where John's children grew up, beaches where we have spent the summers, study overlooking the hills where I wrote my novel.

Jobs in Devon: **local paper:**

Nursing assistant in old age home
School cook
Classroom assistant (hourly paid) in school
Live-in help for the aged
Assistant in petrol station shop

The JobCentre

Categories are:
Secretarial
Marketing and business
Domestic services

Jobsearch: education/language teaching

Permanent jobs anywhere in UK: 0
3-year contracts in Devon area: 0
3-year contracts in UK: Strathclyde, Leicester, Chichester, Canterbury, Oxford
Full-time short contracts in Devon area: 1- 3 month summer job in Torquay

Part-time short contracts in Devon area: classroom assistant.

How do people work in Devon? How do they LIVE?

My size is downed
My line is streamed
My crest is fallen

I apply for a job in the local bookshop.

March 20th

Meanwhile, teaching must continue – the students mustn't suffer. This is an anguish – teaching a course for the last time, caring about their moods, assignment anxieties, worries about grades and grants – to stop myself kicking over the table and saying, “Do you know, none of this matters to them!”

March 25th

Not even the local bookshop wants me.

Now it is difficult to go along with everyone's kneejerk optimism: “You know, for every closed door another one opens”. I realise they need to say this, not because it might make ME feel better, but because it makes THEM feel better. In my fate out there, is their own reflected.

Now optimism seems laughable. I don't seem to fit any of the slots out there. Not only that, there are whole hoards out there who do. Even the local bookshop was ‘snowed under’ – SNOWED UNDER! – with applications.

You pour your time, vision, life plans into an application form, tailored CV and cover letter. You are sincere, thorough, describe your experience, your reasons for applying, your special outstanding qualities and match to the job. In return you receive an acknowledgement written and stamped by yourself. Then nothing. You know you have been etherised: you have already been relegated to the Personnel waste disposal unit.

April

During April I descend into the pit. I realise, filling out application forms, I have become contaminated. The leprosy of failure has entered my CV and placed a hint of disease over all the previous years and years of work. Yes, but why did she lose her job? There must be something which her referees aren't admitting. Yes, you can read between the lines – a bit of an individualist. Probably doesn't fit in: not a teamworker, you can tell. Weeks follow of resounding silence from unacknowledged job applications. I realise what I have accumulated over the years is not experience: it is pricing myself out of the job market.

“For every closed door another one opens”.

That's the open door: a black hole going nowhere.

The world divides into two: there are people who work, and people who don't work. And it seems an extraordinary miracle to be in the first group. The postman has work, the man who delivers our vegetables, the bus driver, the porter, the receptionist, the car park attendant – they have their special clothes, their caps and coats and sacks and blazers: and the people they say hello to every day on their rounds, and their pay packet, however meagre- and the morning routine leaving the house, setting off, saying to their neighbours, "Oh, I work at the post office" or "I'm a milkman". I have nothing to say, except, "I was," or "I ought to be---" or "In my head, this is what I am."

Job interviews: May and June

Bristol interview: running an English language centre

The bed and breakfast has cardboard walls soaked with the stench of bacon. The interview goes sparkingly well in the morning. In the afternoon we talk about money. I realise all the stuff about experience, academic credentials, teaching skills, research activity are a thin veneer. We all know the truth: how silly. What's really wanted is money, someone who will make lots and lots of it. I don't get the job.

Reading interview: running English language short courses

The interview goes sparkingly well in the morning, and in many ways this **WOULD** be a great springing out of the fire. But in the afternoon, the dean says, "You seem very firmly embedded in Devon cultural life". He lists what I am embedded in: poetry, TV, music, schools,. "How would you feel about moving to Reading?" There is a second's silence in which I scream out, "No!" I don't get the job.

Plymouth interview: working on a new Drama in the community programme

This one is the last in the line. All the other hopes have been downed like a row of skittles. Now I am like the stuck bull before dying, and this is the last stake. I am glorious in defeat. I rise in magnificence to the challenge, telling every story of every talent and desire that has driven me through 20 years of a career. I see their eyes sparkle with admiration and surprise. Even those on the panel who thought they had known me, look dazzled as the dying bull roars its last. I don't get the job.

July 20th

At college, work goes on and on as if nothing runs out at all – nothing is expected to go dry – my energy, my capacity to smile and smile. And now I am letting go of everything – the sense of a career, an office, colleagues, something to get up for in the mornings, something to dress for, the feeling that doing a good job might matter, the feeling that there might be fairness or justice at all, being able to live in my home, being able to pay for a home. In the morning I say to John, "I'll have to go abroad again".

I think now the carrying on will kill me. Pretending to be well will be the finish of me. I feel my heart pounding like a pressure cooker, and at night I can hardly breathe, as if large rocks have been rolled onto my chest.

I go to the doctor and for the first time admit I am being made ill with stress. I am signed off with stress for six weeks, and never return to my department. It is the first time in eight years I have had more than one day's absence.

10.3 On not living happily ever after

On July 22nd I was offered a one-year half-time post in the Primary Education department of my college, training teachers in the Literacy strategy. This acted as a temporary 'salve' to the situation, and with relief I accepted the job.

The year was exquisite torment. The Primary team were resentful they had not been able to select their own new colleague, but had had one foisted on them by the Dean. They were sceptical that language teaching with international students had anything to do with language teachers in a primary school, and were not prepared to change their minds. They were sure that teaching international students was as far away from teaching in a UK school as teaching on Mars would be. All of this meant that the torment of the 'end of contract' was due to come round again a second time: but this time within a team who were desperate to choose a colleague from their own world, and who saw my language as different no matter how much the truth and the testimony of students proved otherwise.

In this primary team year, I was trying against all the evidence, to "restore the life disrupted by the crisis" (Vasilyuk 1991), not seeing that too fundamental a conflict was in place; and that separation and transformation was the inevitable conclusion. It did indeed emerge that my primary team post was being advertised and interviews were in place even as I struggled to assimilate. Understanding at last that a working life in Devon was a hope too far, I began to apply for posts in an ever expanding radius from home. On July 6th 2001 I was offered the post of course leader for an MA in English Language Teaching in Oxford, and moved onto a 60-foot narrowboat on the Thames to start a new dual life separated by 180 miles.

Whatever personal regeneration I was capable of after these events, in more global and political terms the outcome was the opposite of desirable. It told us all, within the system as it stood in 2000/2001, that there was no meaningful, or legally binding, connection between work success and work security: between what one gave an institution and what one received. The two had come adrift.

10.4 Work and the law

Employment law in the UK up till 2001 was the most biased towards the employer, of any other country in the world. Even countries with notoriously bad records of human rights, such as Burma and Saudi Arabia, offered the employee more basic rights. (Personal correspondence with Coles, Professor of International Law 2001). In 2001, British universities had exploited every loophole in English law to ensure:

- the employment could remain casual indefinitely and irrespective of quality of the work or length of service
- that employers could force employees to waive their rights to redundancy pay or any appeal in the event on redundancy
- that the banning of such waivers after 2000 could be bypassed, simply by extending the original contract on which the waiver still held
- that such contract extensions did not require negotiation or signed acceptance on the part of the employee, because by continuing to remain in employment a tacit acceptance of the conditions is assumed
- the only condition which would make the institution liable if it failed to be met, is that of offering a minimum of three months notice. This, in my own case, the institution took trouble to do.

The fact is, that the laws of 2001 on which my conditions of service operated, were just 2 years later not only illegal, but a contradiction of the tenets of morality enshrined in the European Commission for Human Rights. It also failed in several basic principles listed under the ACAS Redundancy Handling agreements, 2002:

1) Failure to consult :

Where an employer fails in any way to comply with the requirements to consult about proposed redundancies, a complaint may be made to an employment tribunal. Case law has shown that dismissals have been found to be unfair where

a union has been consulted but not the individual. It is therefore best practice that individuals who are to be made redundant are consulted .

2) Unfair selection for redundancy

As far as possible, objective criteria, precisely defined and capable of being applied in an independent way, should be used when determining which employees are to be selected for redundancy. The purpose of having objective criteria is to ensure that employees are not unfairly selected for redundancy. Examples of such criteria are length of service, attendance record, experience and capability. The chosen criteria must be consistently applied -- (ACAS 2002)

In retrospect, what appears to be the most culpable act of the institution and its members, was in **barring me from access to my rights**. They did so in a calculated way by:

- refusing to invoke the term *redundancy*, and thus the conditions pertaining to this
- persisting in a literal return to the notion of casual short-term contracts
- focusing on the legal status of the waiver clause

Laws reflect the regime that generates them. The Nuremberg laws were the opposite of justice, and yet they were law. They offer to us a spectre of how monstrously the law can be used to facilitate injustice. One injustice, like an electric current, connects with all others that have been perpetrated: and the anguish for me lay in knowing that injustice therefore existed for everyone.

memory is no less primary than the prick of a pin, or its silver glimmer, or the taste of the blood it pulls from the finger. The Jew is pricked by a pin and remembers other pins. It is only by tracing the pinprick back to other pinpricks ---- when his mother tried to fix his sleeve while his arm was still in it, when his grandfather's fingers fell asleep from stroking his great-grandfather's damp forehead, when Abraham tested the knife point to be sure Isaac would feel no pain – that the Jew is able to know why it hurts.

When a Jew encounters a pin, he asks: **What does it remember like?** (Safran Foer 2002: 198-199)

10.5 Redundancy and the alchemy of creation

In 2003 I began a second novel, with the aim of placing at the heart of it the experience of redundancy, and exploring the fictional reality of the question “what does it remember like?” (ibid).

In the novel, Joel Elderkind, the main character, has inherited from his father an amber trading company, that was founded by his family in Poland five generations earlier. The amber company had saved the family from the death camps in the 1930s, in that its success had offered them a passport for entry into Britain. Joel's grandfather and father had made a success of the company in Britain, but in the late twentieth century, the forces of the modern business world had begun to bite deep. Cheap plastics and other imitations were beginning to replace the real amber shipped from the Baltic, and Joel is forced to make a bitter choice: to go into liquidation, or sell his company to a plastics manager that will keep the family name. He chooses the latter.

The scene below takes place on the day Joel hands over the company to Blitz, the young and dynamic new company executive.

* * * *

“Here’s to us, Joel, and Elderkind Amber. Neither of us will look back now, you’ll see.”

Blitz raised the glass to his Cupid-bow lips and poured the champagne down fluently. Fizz swallow fizz swallow down the flute, the chute, the lips loved by Tanya, down into the greasy greedy cesspit of his stomach.

Joel watched and blinked with shame.

When you are middle-aged may you be fat as a pig. May your belly burst your best pants at your most important board meeting. May you have uncontrollable episodes of farting in public.

“Terrific stuff!” Blitz grinned, staring into the empty glass.

Joel watched, holding his glass untouched in his hand like a dead tulip.

“Of course, at the early stages, just for the first few years or so, there will be some gaps to fill, some debts to stop up, of course. Things have been falling apart a little in the past few years, wouldn’t you agree, Joel? But I have no doubts I can tide it over of course. Still, it will be a little thin just to start with. Of course, you’ll know about that Joel, won’t you? After all, all this is about those thin times.”

They both looked at the champagne glass in Joel's hand.

I would rather drink my own blood than drink to this.

Joel set the glass on the floor beside him.

"I think we should have a serious talk about that, you know," Blitz continued, wiping the corner of his lip carefully with an initialled handkerchief.

“Just for the first month or so, I can’t say quite how long, it might be better for you to step back, so to speak. You know, let me get on with the job, build it back to its old glory. You’ll have to trust me, but I think it would be better for us both if perhaps you just left me to it, you know, at least to start with.”

"What do you mean, leave you to it?"

“Joel, let me come clean. What with the state of the company just now, I’m doing you a favour taking it over. I can’t afford to take you on too.”

"What do you mean, take me on? It's my company – mine and yours."

“I know you feel that way ---“

Joel found himself on his feet, standing over the desk, leaning over with the sudden advantage of height, his blood drumming into his head, into his eyes,

“**Feel** that way! I am talking about what we agreed, you and me. You put in the capital, you put in your own staff, I manage. I’m talking about what we agreed.”

“Sorry, Joel. I know it’s tough. That’s of course the way I’d like it. But for the moment it just can’t work out like that. I’m going to staff it with my own team, just for the moment. That’s the way it is.”

“Staff it with my own team. Is this management –speak for firing me?”

“Well I wouldn’t quite put it that way, Joel. I don’t like to use that terminology.”

“No, you don’t like to use that terminology, of course you don’t. Let’s try this. Our agreement was a sham, right? I’m not convenient to have around any more, right? You’ve lied and wheedled me out of my name, my company, my life, and now I’d better stand aside and let you walk over me. Have I got it right now?”

“Don’t take it like this, Joel, I-----“

“Don’t make a fuss you mean? Go quietly you mean? Blitz, do you know where this company would be if my family had just gone along quietly? Do you, Blitz? Do you know where you and your little scheme would be now if my family had gone along quietly without making a fuss?”

“I know what you’re saying, Joel, --“

“Oh no you don’t, you cosy little yuppie. My family have nursed this business for five generations, a world war and two continents: your staff team have been around five minutes, and all they know about are cheap imitations and quick fixes. This business is just a load of pretty coloured smarties to you. I bet your ‘staff’ think five generations is some rock band. After five minutes, they’ll trash you and walk over you to the next quick fix money spinner. What you’re doing isn’t just stupid, it’s inefficient, it’s ignorant, it’s ---“

“I’m sorry you feel this way, Joel, I knew it would be hard for you but -----.”

“It’s murder, it’s murder,” and Joel was sobbing now, because the wound had done its journey from the skin into the blood and coursed itself round his veins and it had reached his heart and stabbed him there, sent his heart and all the memories mixed in it into spasm.

He crashed out of the room, knocking over the champagne glass, kicking the visitor’s chair, wrenching the door handle on his way, and just as he reached the hall, the wound turned into animal groans of pain, and he was holding his heart like an animal warming itself as it fell, savaged, its heart an open gash of raw and twitching muscle.

As a coping strategy within my own repertoire, I have chosen visceral engagement with the specificity of the situation: a ‘not letting go’ and a revisiting of the specifics of the ‘beloved’ - the amber, the working environment, long beyond the moment when transformation rather than restoration would have been the healthier option. In following this through in fiction to its bitter physical finale, I have worked it through my own psyche and emerged from it ready for the change that followed - unlike my less fortunate fictional hero.

Please see Appendix Reading 16 for a paper on the sources and pedagogic implications of this novel extract.

10.6 Critical incident as transformation

I have learnt and been transformed by the critical incident described in this chapter, in the following specific ways:

- 1) I am more aware of the difference between situations which are capable of restoration, and those which are not. I now understand that it is a matter of survival and self-preservation, to understand the difference between the two and to arrive at this understanding early enough to remain ‘well’ and proactive. Paralysis and ‘un-wellness’ all suggest that the psyche is still trapped in a situation which will offer no solutions.
- 2) Transformation of a critical incident (in the ‘strong’ sense) includes the capacity to learn from negativity whilst walking away from it: ‘to eradicate, in real practice in the sphere of the senses, all traces of the spiritual organism’s infection by the now fading false values” (Vasilyuk 1991: 140). Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine all explore projects which arose from this re-affirmed self in my new post at Oxford Brookes University; whilst Chapter Eleven considers the specific struggles of this re-affirmation in my role as Head of Applied Linguistics.
- 3) I am aware of the danger of visibility too late – of not being known fully to decision-makers until decisions have been made. Tannen (2001) and Marshall (1984) suggest that women are less likely to make their successes visible to managers, or if they do, they are regarded negatively. Yet this critical incident has shown me that trusting that one’s work is known and appreciated can be a fatal error. Specifically, I am more aware of the importance of communication with Senior Management and of making one’s successes visible
- 4) I am aware of the importance of information in being fully armed and supported through a critical incident. Not fully understanding my rights, and not recognising early enough where and how support might be found, was a block to my success.
- 5) I am aware of the importance of wellbeing as a mode of survival. This can, and did in my case study above, derive from: physical therapies such as the Alexander Technique lesson, the solidarity of colleagues, ‘writing it out’ fictionally, ‘writing it out’ factually, recognising the symptoms of stress and responding to it.

Chapter Eleven looks at how the transformations described above nourished and informed my role as Head of Applied Linguistics, a post to which I was promoted in 2004. The chapter explores the paradoxes of the management role, and the ways in which the ill-health described here offered powerful models of its opposite, as well as strategies for dealing with critical incident from a different, and more influential, positioning within the institution.

Chapter Eleven

Management as transformation: leadership in the higher academy

Empowerment.

My role as *manager* is to provide a rich environment that empowers *my team* to find and express their own voice.

Authenticity

I am only prepared to act through (my core) beliefs, rather than through desire for power, status, recognition, or fashion. I regard my own authenticity as acting always in congruence with these beliefs, and wherever they are compromised or threatened I will seek repair and resolution, however hard-earned these might be.

Chapter Ten explored redundancy from the perspective of an employee, and considered ways in which ‘strong’ critical incidents of this kind lead to transformation and development. Chapter Eleven explores the ways in which this development nourished and informed my practice as Head of Applied Linguistics, a post to which I was promoted in 2004 after 2 ½ years at Oxford Brookes University. I consider ‘transformation’ from the perspective of generating a new culture of empowerment within an academic group, informed by my recent experience of crisis. In ‘making something new’ for my team, and of the management role, I am driven by core values: a belief in the educational imperative of **empowerment** both for teacher and learner/teacher as learner; and a belief in **authenticity**: being congruous with my core beliefs even where these are at risk or in a climate of dis-ease. Interviews with five members of my team are drawn on in order to explore the impact of change after one year. Chapter Eleven also addresses the question: how does this management story connect with those of the writer, educator and researcher as I move from personal to collective responsibility, from private to public transformation? How can insights from these multiple roles help to resolve the paradoxes which emerge in the experience of leadership in the academy?

11.1 Connecting leadership and management

In March 2004, the Centre for international students where I was employed, moved into the Institute of Education and became reconstituted as an Applied Linguistics academic group. The post of Head of Group was created, and advertised internally amongst my team and the Institute at large. The selection process was in two phases: a presentation to the team entitled “How I would manage change as Head of Group” followed by an interview with senior staff. I focused, in my presentation, on the importance of ‘owning’ change so that it genuinely enhanced practice and empowered individuals; also the importance of leadership with emotional intelligence and principled vision at its heart. The views of both the team and senior staff were thus involved in my appointment. It was with this mandate that I made the transition from colleague to line manager of my team.

The core difference between its first formation and the new one, was that the Centre was now embedded within the Institute of Education as a whole. Its systems would be no longer free-standing, but managed and monitored centrally within the Institute, and within a matrix structure which balanced the management of *people* by Heads of Group, and the management of *programmes* by Directors. Specific examples of change we were about to experience, included: research targets, appraisal cycles, centralised workload plans and expansion of teaching profile into other areas of the Institute. Typical of other Heads of Department (as in Ramsden 1998, Sarros et al 1997a and b), my challenge would include both micro-management of complexity - small and local tasks intrinsic to the daily management of the group - and macro-management of the change process (Kotter 2001). Gosling and Mintzberg point out that leadership and management roles need to be closely interwoven in order to be effective: “the separation of management from leadership is dangerous. Just as management without leadership encourages an uninspired style which deadens activities, leadership without management encourages a disconnected style which promotes hubris”. (Gosling and Mintzberg 2003: 34) So I as team leader wished to connect the local complexities of Institute-based systems - *where we are now* - with the larger vision of empowering and professionalizing the team - *where we wish to go*.

Senge adds to our concept of the ‘learning organisation’ the notion of two kinds of learning: ‘survival learning’ which is the capacity of an organisation to adapt and respond to the present, and ‘generative learning’ - “learning that enhances our capacity to create” (Senge 1990: 14). In his notion of ‘capacity to create’ Senge is clear that “organisations learn only through individuals who learn. Individual learning does not guarantee organizational learning. But without it no organizational learning occurs”. (Senge 1990: 139). These concepts of ‘survival/adaptive’ versus ‘generative’ learning offer me in this section, a framework not only for the evolution of a team, but for my own individual/personal evolution as a manager.

Managing complexity

Moving overnight from employee to manager meant that I needed to respond rapidly and reactively in a mode of ‘survival learning’, to multiple new systems and challenges. The challenges required rapid understanding of basic employment law, equal opportunity and age discrimination, national frameworks such as HERA (Higher Education Role Analysis) and TRAC, international standards such as British Council benchmarks for qualified teacher status, local systems such as workload planning tariffs, procedures for managing underperformance, selection and recruitment, complaint and grievance. Sarros et al’s research suggests that my experience of “learning on the job” is typical of Head of Department ‘preparation’: “indeed, learning on the job has as many, if not more, benefits as bringing to it previous experience that may be outdated” (Sarros et al 1997b: 291). Specific examples of tasks addressed within the first week to first year of my new role, were:

- Advising and supporting staff deemed to fall short of British Council teacher qualification benchmarks (in spite of many years of successful teaching experience) in anticipation of external audits
- Regularising and equalising more than 25 staff contracts on a wide number of contract types: permanent senior lecturers, fractional contracts from 0.25 to 0.75, hourly paid lecturers with workloads ranging from 3 to 18 weekly teaching hours, short-term contracts and teaching-only contracts

- Dealing with pay claims and complaints about contractual arrangements and working conditions
- Negotiating 25 job descriptions for clarification of role scales by the HERA panel (2005).
- Developing 25 workload plans using a system of multipliers and tariffs, and collating these in order to be equivalent to cross-Institute staff workplans
- Collecting and collating detailed data on staff actual work versus predicted/planned work, and accounting for the difference between the two (TRAC)
- Resolving unfinished and evolving grievance, complaint and underperformance issues within course teams

It was essential, to be authentic to my own publicly stated values, that I should contain these management complexities, and not allow them to be prioritised over leadership vision: *where are we going*. Yet the tasks, and the knowledge areas attached to them, were the most new, the most paradoxical, and the most time-heavy for me. I was aware of functioning reactively and using ‘survival/adaptive’ intelligence to do so (Senge 1990). Staff themselves, in recent research on their views of the role of their Head, cite as the most important functions “serving as an advocate of the department” and “developing long-range plans” (Middlehurst 1993:135). To be the ‘manager without leadership’ described by Gosling and Mintzberg (2003), would have been a disappointment not only to myself, but importantly to my team too. Sarros et al suggest my experience was not uncommon: “female HoDs placed significantly more importance on (the management role) than their male counterparts” (Sarros et al 1997b: 288), they write. This “could in part be associated with the need to develop a profile in the role of department head that in many cases is assumed to be a male-dominated position” (ibid). Whilst this may in part have been a factor in my case, in the main I was more conscious of the drive to be a force of good within the system, and to prove my capacity to be so rapidly and seamlessly in order to maintain the trust of my colleagues. Yet it was not in these minutiae that a ‘force of good’ might be clearly experienced, and resolutions to the issues listed above were quickly forgotten before new ones emerged, hydra-like and relentless.

Leading change: Individual learning leads to team learning:

It was in the broader, more all-embracing vision of the future and leadership of change, that a force of good might be truly experienced. Here, my goals had been explicit from the first presentation:

- Resolving and transforming a culture of division and individualism, so colleagues would experience the accumulative value of individual learning as part of whole-team learning
- Providing a climate of wellbeing and health in which both individuals, and group-as-organism might grow: what Lewin describes as “a stream of ease” (Lewin 2001).
- Generating staff engagement with and excitement about personal professional development, so as to be better placed within an institution aiming for research visibility.

The sections below will explore the specific ways in which I addressed these broader goals, and the impact they had on the team as a whole, and individuals within it.

11.2 Joining up individual and team learning: managing transformation

Models of continuing professional development suggest a process that connects the practitioner’s sense of self-worth with his/her growth within and with the team. (Zuber-Skerrit 1996, Peel 2005). Zuber-Skerrit suggests a model in which the team progresses from individual research interests towards a collective notion of professionalism; whilst Edge (1993, 2002) and Johnson and Johnson (1991) offer engagement with the team as a starting point for self-development. In the case of my own academic group, each colleague had a strong sense of professional pride; the challenge was to grow from this a sense of self as researcher as well as educator. In addition, notions of ‘professional’ and ‘research’ needed to be deconstructed. How far did we as a team share an understanding of these terms? And how far were we subscribing to the definitions valued within the institution?

Research, for the majority of my colleagues, was the process of interaction with students, learning from this, and refining teaching materials and curriculum as a result. The institution, in contrast, was highly focused on RAE submissible outcomes: publication in refereed journals, presentation at international conferences, and visibility within the scholarly community. Similarly, professionalism in our new workplace was closely monitored, with checklists of quality, expected qualifications and the requirement of evidence through peer observations and professional portfolios; whilst the notion of professionalism which emerged in team discussions emphasised: collegiality, concern for the quality experience and care of the student, respect for one another and for the highest standards of teaching and fairness. We were aware that *recording evidence* of ‘professionalism’, and *living/practising* it, may be very different things.

To fulfil the goals outlined in Section 11.1 above, I planned, set up, managed and evaluated the portfolio of opportunities listed below. In some cases, the events described were linear and sequential, one process triggering the next: individual meetings at 2) and 3), for example, stimulated a raft of ideas for development at 4); and these in turn, generated new targets and priorities described at 5). Yet the process was also circular and concurrent, with my own learning about individuals feeding back into team activities, and vice versa in an ever-moving cycle. The process also involved individual learning and team learning, in continuous cycles of mutual nourishment.

- 1) As a first team activity, I planned a full day at the Institute venue 5 miles from our usual workplace, in order to draw up shared principles and values that underpinned our practice. I hoped through this, to prioritise vision and values above the local and the complex which had been the source of division and mistrust in the past. The day achieved what I had hoped for, and the team arrived at a collective statement of values to take us forward into the next phase. This Code of Practice was agreed by everyone in the team, and was posted in every office as a permanent statement of good practice.

Applied Linguistics Team: Code of Practice

- **We agree that members of the team should work in a spirit of support and trust of one another.**
- **We agree that members of the team should work on the assumption that colleagues are competent and professional, and are doing the best job they can.**
- **We agree that problems and concerns about other colleagues should be resolved with the colleague him/herself, internally, non-confrontationally, and in a spirit of safety and mutual respect.**
- **We agree that gossip and rumour, and undermining of colleagues, should not be tolerated or encouraged**
- **We agree that the contribution of each member of the team, to discussion and course development, should be valued**
- **We agree that decisions and processes should be made transparent and fair, and that information of relevance to staff should be made public and accessible**

Formulated June 25th 2004

2) In the first six weeks of appointment, I met each member of staff, fractional, fulltime and hourly paid, to talk through their current work conditions, their goals and aspirations, the areas in which they were and were not expressed fully by their working lives. From these interviews, I derived a set of staff development ideas which I felt would meet their needs: celebrating strengths and successes, dealing with ‘gaps’ and insecurities, providing opportunity for shared problem-solving, providing clearer channels of communication and information-sharing, and offering opportunities and stimulus for growth.

3) After these initial discussions, I set up specific ones focused on each individual developing an area of research interest. My challenge was to open, for colleagues new to research, the notion that research could emanate from their own practice; that

‘research’ involved reformulating these experiences as enquiries and addressing them systematically; and that doing so could authentically energise their experience as educators. In addition, by identifying questions in this way, it was possible through my overview, to connect colleagues with common enquiries. Thus, over the year colleagues gradually formed pairs and small groups to answer a series of common questions: how students use library resources, how they respond to written feedback, how to assess participation in groupwork, how to encourage interaction between British and International students (and why this does not happen automatically) .

4) These meetings suggested to me a raft of opportunities to join up individual learning, personal aspirations, and the health and growth of the team as a whole :

From individual learning and mentoring to team learning

- individual support for e-learning questions, on a tutorial/surgery basis:
- Mentoring and feedback of written articles and papers being submitted for journals
- ‘critical friend’ observations of problem classes to offer support and feedback
- ‘dry runs’ for colleagues giving conference papers to trial their paper and receive supportive feedback
- topic-based discussion circles for colleagues with specialist interests: an IELTS (International English Language Testing Service) special interest group
- visiting speakers on topics of specialist interest where we would like to gather or expand our knowledge: dyslexia, formulating research bids, using statistics to interpret student results
- a reading circle to read and discuss cutting edge papers and articles in our field
- workshops to work through on our own terms issues and directives from the University: for example, making sense of peer observation, dealing with plagiarism, standardising assessment feedback

- termly group newsletter, *Talking Shop*, in which we shared news both personal and professional, including pictures, poems and professional updates
 - celebration of successes such as: replaying for colleagues successful conference papers; showcasing examples of excellent teaching, talking about and launching book and chapter publications, celebrating a PhD success
 - termly good practice awaydays to share work in progress, evolve team action plans, share outcomes of good practice
- 5) From the more formal Personal Development Reviews emerged a set of action points, leading to effective change for each individual. In broad terms, these interviews allowed me to perceive where each individual might find catalysts for change along the spectrum from discomfort to delight (as described in Chapter Nine): discomfort in being the areas of lack, gap or insecurity, in contrast to stimuli that could reconnect teachers with delight in their profession. The discomfort sources generated for me as manager a very large caseload: contractual issues, finding responsibilities for those who felt undervalued, offloading responsibilities from those who felt over worked: and all the time keeping a firm eye on overall sustainability, equity of opportunity and load, as well as my own judgements about where people's strengths lay, where their weaknesses were and how far these were amenable to change. Most of all, the challenge was to transform the 'discomfort' into delight/excitement by connecting it with meaningful new learning, collaboration, resources and opportunities.

11.3 Has transformation really happened?

External indicators suggested that transformation had happened after one year. Three colleagues gave conference papers nationally and internationally for the first time; and seven colleagues who had been on hourly paid contrasts were upgraded to permanent 0.5 posts. An active researcher in the group won an ESRC research grant and two research assistants were appointed to join the team who offered living testimony to the value of research. One year earlier, we had evolved our Code of Practice, and generated a set of

action points which had all been implemented and had run for one year. All of these had happened, and been successful. The British Council external audit highly commended Staff Development in the team, and the overall quality contributed to the Institute Investors in People status. Yet how did my team themselves experience the changes of the year? If these had been successful, then what next and where now?

Team responses one year on

To answer these questions, as part of our Awayday I arranged a long lunch in the University gardens with salmon and strawberries; and gave questions to colleagues to discuss in small clusters under trees in the late June sunshine. The notes and summaries below were those collected concurrent with the event, both during or straight afterwards.

During the lunch break, ask at least 3 colleagues your question. Check which parts of their response they are happy to share with others, and make a note of these so you can report back at the end of the day.

Do you have a specific strength or interest which we as a team should know more about? (personal or professional: you choose) What is this, and what would you like us to know about it?

Many of us are locked into roles at work, which do not do justice to the rounded person we are. This dissertation has shown how important it is to me, that I am a creative writer synonymous with being an educator, and that the two inform one another in a fundamental way. A year on from Head of Applied Linguistics, I realise we have related to one another fundamentally from the roles that are visible at work. I am aware that one colleague is at core a painter as well as a teacher; another is an actor and musician, at the heart of his role of educator. These are colleagues whose ‘other’ cores are visible to me, because I share them, (I play music, for example, with the latter colleague). But what about others which are not visible? This question revealed the following:

- K is a photographer, and has been to Kathmandu to film the temples and Tibetan stupas. She has a sequence of photos of sherpas on walking routes through the Himalayas, and she shares these with students.
- H has returned to pottery after some years, and now has a wheel at home.
- S is a deep sea diver and has dived at the Great Barrier Reef.

- J has been collecting antiquarian books about Macau and Hong Kong for the past fifteen years
- R goes skating every Tuesday morning and runs a jazz dancing class, which she is opening up to the University.

Has being a part of the Applied Linguistics academic group made any difference to you in the past year and why/not? In what ways would you like it to make a difference in the future?

- sounds more respectable: the terminology equates with ‘progress’ and ‘future’
- a new sense of security and identity
- more inclusive of all than previously
- it *is* an academic field
- more scaffolding of academic possibilities: eg. research groups
- I like getting emails beginning ‘Dear Applied Linguists’
- it made Jane my line manager and allowed me to shift around in terms of what I can do. Future visions: a reputation for Applied Linguistics in future, on a par with other reputable institutions
- lunchtime presentations and talks, and insights into teaching and practice of colleagues. For the future, perhaps some more theory related research, an in house reading group.
- events such as today that afford professional/academic interchange (plus social!) have given us a clearer identity.

Is there one professional or academic problem/question/issue which you would like opened up with colleagues?

- a deeper understanding of English language itself; descriptions of English
- less about pedagogy and more about language itself
- scaffolding one’s career: stages to go through for publishing

If you were asked to set up and run a workshop/discussion/presentation on any academic or professional issue in the next academic year, what would it be?

- more of a description of issues in linguistics rather than pedagogy
- more sharing of information about research areas
- how to become an active researcher to enhance our career prospects
- how to play the publishing game

I was surprised the extent to which the group as a whole were ready to move from professional and teaching related debate, to focused attention on career-related research outcomes - “playing the publishing game”. I felt relieved I had ‘taken the temperature’ of the group at this stage, in order to test that; as I had not picked this feeling up ‘in the air’ and would otherwise have missed it. Another surprise, was the fact that a solid core in the group wished to return to our parent discipline, linguistics and description of language, and were tired of the emphasis on language **in education**. It is possible to trace these specific wishes to those with stable permanent contracts and responsibility roles. The Awayday feedback suggested that those members of the team were now thinking more proactively about their own visibility as researchers; others who contractually had felt, or still felt, vulnerable, were less interested in ‘playing the game’. The new dynamic of the Applied Linguistics group had given them a stronger sense of identity, security and professional pride, but not necessarily increased the incentive to ‘go the extra mile’ for goals still seen as corporate and distant.

In response to this dual demography with its separating needs, the following year, teaching-related discussions were planned alongside research-specific activities such as: advice on generating research bids; staff talks on ‘state of the art’ fields in linguistics; and introductions to research active colleagues University-wide to form collaborative research bids.

Individual responses one year on

To explore more deeply what the changes had meant for individuals, I asked colleagues if they would be prepared to talk to me in a semi-structured interview about their

experiences of the year. Five colleagues were happy to do so and have given permission for their names and evidence to appear in this dissertation.

The conversations were organised within a busy working day, in our offices, using a digital camera fixed on the table. Although my colleagues were not asked to think about or prepare anything in advance, it could be that the Awayday process described above had involved them already in reflecting on the questions I was about to ask. My three broad questions were:

- Have you noticed any changes or developments for yourself personally during the first academic year in which we have been an Applied Linguistics group?
- If so, which were the particular mechanisms or activities which helped to bring about these changes?
- Do you have any ideas for going forward - continuing the good aspects and building on them?

Please see Audio-Visual Files: 4 Interviews with colleagues

Martin Clips 1 - 7

Martin is one of the longest standing members of Applied Linguistics who had experienced two other Schools of the University and worked under two earlier managements. In Clip 1 he says: “this is the best year I can remember”. He is clear about the specific mechanisms for this: “different management structure”, encouragement, support and help (Clip 2); a ‘more consultative’ management style (Clip 4) and the Awaydays (Clip 5). He applied for my post, and was happy to talk about this in our conversation. In Clip 3 he describes ways in which he might have handled my role differently, for example dealing more decisively with hourly paid staff and delineating his role more assertively. As an overview of changes for him after a year, he mentions the atmosphere of trust (Clip 6), and the different dynamic in the team: “it feels like a revolution” (Clip 5). His main regret is “wasted opportunity in the past” (Clip 7).

Richard Clips 8 - 10

Richard was the first person in the unit, when it consisted of four lecturers sharing a room in the Languages corridor. Like Martin, he has known the group under three different Schools and three different management structures. In clip 8, Richard explains the impact of the new structure on his work: he says the appraisal process (Personal Development Review or PDR) is one example of change. He valued the more focused and detailed review we had, and the fact that specific targets were set and followed through. Clip 9 says that he values the specific mechanisms of awaydays and meetings in which “we are looking at why we teach, how to improve” - issues which used to “get lost in the past”. Specifically, in Clip 10 he explains how much he values “knowing what others are doing” and the Awaydays “which are wonderful”.

Richard talks in the conversation, about his first research project, shared with a colleague Teresa, and emanating from a new module they are teaching. He talks of the satisfaction it has given him, to be gathering information in a new way. The first stage of his research has been to gather information through questionnaires, about how students use resources such as the library and electronic journals; and to correlate this with their grades in writing tasks.

Teresa Clips 11 - 12

Teresa is course manager of one of the principle programmes in the group, and during the year has been moved to permanent status. She starts by saying how much more secure she now feels as a result. Clip 11 explains that she does not regard herself as research active, so feels the year has not involved so much change for her, although she has benefited from others “growing towards the sun”. In Clip 12, she talks about the project she shares with Richard, and begins tangibly to ‘shine’ when doing so.

Fred and Juliet Clips 13 - 22

Fred and Juliet are two ‘young’ researchers who presented their first conference papers during this academic year. Juliet was upgraded at the start of the year from hourly paid to 0.5 permanent instructor, and at this stage in the year was imminently to be offered a 0.5 Senior Lecturer role in addition.

My first question was: What has the year done for you? (Clip 13).

Juliet replies by saying “it’s wonderful to do research”. The year had shown her “the meaning of what research could be” (Clip 14). Fred continues by saying “It’s the first year I’ve really felt I could try things out.” The year had given him “confidence to look at other aspects of my work” (Clip 15).

I then asked “what were the mechanisms that made you feel more comfortable”? (Clip 16). Juliet mentioned the importance of the change of contractual status: “I’m in the academic world” and the value of a supportive line manager “though we probably take you for granted” (Clip 17). Fred says he feels that research is for the first time being taken seriously, and is also part of official documentation (Clip 18). In addition he valued initiatives such as our newsletter *Talking Shop* “which appears in everybody’s pigeon hole” (Clip 22). The experience of the year had given them “a sense of identity as a group” (Clip 19), and a sense of “finding your voice” (Juliet in clip 20).

As a summary of their responses, all five suggested that transformation had indeed taken place in the course of the year, and that this had been positive, practical and palpable for them. The change lay both in atmosphere - of trust, security, identity - and in practice - involvement in research, focused appraisals, learning about one another’s work at Awaydays. All were clear about specific mechanisms which had helped to achieve these changes: from the minute, such as circular emails from me addressed Dear Applied Linguists (Juliet), to the significant such as financial and academic support to give conference papers abroad (Fred). The ‘management’ issues described in section 11.2 which had really impacted, were those relating to contractual status: both Juliet and Teresa mention this as a first point of change from which many of the other changes emanated. It is possible to develop within the culture of perpetual change that Higher Education is, if one has a sense of belonging to that change. Several colleagues whose contractual status suggested to them a failure to belong (small fractions, hourly paid), did not opt into the cycles of development offered here; or if so, did so sporadically and uncertainly. Maslow (1943) suggests that security, stability and ‘safety’ are amongst the most fundamental in the hierarchy of needs; and these in turn lead to ‘belonging’ needs, the sense of community. From the management perspective, these core needs were at

risk for those with vulnerable contracts; and only once resolved, activated the many further layers leading towards a desire for fulfilment and self-actualisation.

The next section considers a critical incident which propelled the group into crisis, placing at risk in a fundamental way, core needs for stability and belonging.

11.4 From pothole to glass ceiling: learning from crisis

The critical incident described here is an ‘exempla’ of change in the early 21st century:

The business (and academic) world has become more competitive and more volatile. ---- The net result is that doing what was done yesterday, or doing it 5% better, is no longer a formula for success. Major changes are more and more necessary to survive and compete effectively in this new environment. (Kotter 2001: 86).

In 2007, the group were asked to co-operate with a private company interested in forming a partnership with our centre. The partnership would involve the ‘rebranding’ of the group, and redrawn contracts separating teaching-only staff from executive directors. There were attractive incentives for the University, such as the promise of state-of-the art buildings funded by the company, and membership of a global marketing consortium. However, at the very least, it was likely that much of the advance we had made over three years as an Academic Group would be reversed, and staff would be predominantly members of a commercially driven unit outside the key mission statements of the university as an institution of higher education.

The team collectively were passionately in opposition to this plan and were empowered through this unified response, to act coherently and decisively, and with the strong support of the Union. In this context of crisis, those who had felt outside the sphere of belonging in the context of the group, became fully a part of it when in battle with the institution as a whole. Those who had remained aggrieved at their rights and working conditions within the academic group, began to fight for those rights in contrast to what the new partnership offered. The ‘belonging’ realigned itself along new fault lines: those in passionate opposition, and those who were not.

Chapter Ten described what was learnt from the redundancy experience, or ‘falling down the pothole’. These insights formed, either consciously or subliminally, a focus for my response to this crisis as educator, team leader and human being.

1) I am aware of the difference between situations which are capable of restoration, and those which are not.

Throughout the crisis, there was a further division between those who believed the decision had already been made by Senior Management and that all negotiation was merely cosmetic: and those who believed that the situation was indeed ‘capable of restoration’ and that negotiation was genuine. The latter approach carried us further, and made communication not ‘game-like’ but authentic. My own view was, that we should believe the situation ‘capable of restoration’ until there was clear evidence to the contrary; and in this latter case, move towards other strategies for survival, including walking away from the change, or ‘making the best of it’ by transforming it into something workable. All these options needed to remain ready for use, yet to be timed appropriately - neither too premature a sense of defeat, nor too late a letting go.

2) I am aware, from the first critical incident, of the danger of visibility too late – of not being known fully to decision-makers until the decision has been made.

I have learnt that, once a decision has been made, managers rarely lose face by changing this no matter how compelling the arguments. Collectively as a team and as a Union, we were aware of the need to delay the decision-making process, to insist on transparency and communication, to insist on this involving the whole department in dialogue with the whole Senior Management team so there was no opportunity for faceless paper-decisions which were irreversible.

During the crisis, I became aware that to some in the team, I did not belong to the ‘passionately engaged’ because my approach included ‘talking to the other’ in order to gather maximum information.

3) *I am aware of the importance of information in being fully armed and supported through a critical incident.*

Through the six-week consultancy and decision-making process, the Union and its representatives in the group, sub-groups within the team, I as team leader maintained a persistent and regular stream of information between Senior Management and the team, moving in both directions. Two petition letters were drawn up collating information about the human resources, academic, financial and marketing impact of the plan, signed by each member of the team and delivered by hand by me to the Vice Chancellor's door.

In the course of March Senior Management agreed to meet us 4 times, twice with the Vice Chancellor. The following changes to the original action plan were agreed:

- Instead of a single business proposal being considered on March 26th, the Department are invited to present an alternative business proposal alongside this one, for comparison.
- Instead of a decision being scheduled within days of the proposal presentation, it is now agreed the decision-making will take another further 6 weeks, and will need to involve the Academic Board, Board of Governors, Human Resources, the International Office, and the Unions.
- Instead of this process being taken 'sub judice' the Senior Management Team have agreed to keep us informed at each stage of the process.

Whatever the impact of these exchanges, through this process the team became visible to Senior Management as a group of highly articulate, professionally committed individuals who insisted on being heard; and similarly, Senior Management became visible to us, in terms of their motives, goals, concerns, and the kind of information they were gathering to inform their decision.

4) *I am aware of the importance of wellbeing as a mode of survival – all its components including physical wellbeing.*

As a creative strategy, instead of rehearsing and 'writing large' the pain of the situation I found myself doing the opposite: writing from outside the crisis. In Vasilyuk's terms, it

is an example of the third and final way he describes for ‘transformation’ as a result of crisis: ‘affirming, again in terms of real practice and sensory embodiment, the ideal to which the self has won through’ (Vasilyuk 1991:140). I am not, this time, prepared to tolerate symbolic slamming of car doors against my skull, or falling down potholes, nor is there room within the campaign to feel paralysed by anxiety. Instead I focus my sensory/creative energies on aspects of the outside world which I value and which have remained unchanged through the crisis.

See Appendix reading 10 - poem written and published on the Oxford buses during this period.

5) Transformation of a critical incident (in the ‘strong’ sense) includes the capacity to learn from negativity whilst walking away from it.

Chapter Nine discussed the spectrum from delight to discomfort, as catalysts for change amongst teachers exploring their own practice. In this setting, I was able to reflect on what had been learnt, both negatively and positively, and use this understanding as a way of ‘walking away’ from it.

In terms of un-ease, I experienced the conflict of being perceived outside the fault line of ‘passionate engagement’. My strategy of ‘talking to the other’ was misinterpreted by some, and sub-groups formed which adopted a different strategy. Whilst these all pulled together towards the ultimate cause, I experienced a degree of hurt at being mistrusted at a time of crucial change.

In terms of delight, I had seen that I was in a stronger position to influence events for the good than I had been in my earlier situation (Chapter Ten). I was also able to see the collective pride and identity which fuelled the campaign, and to believe that in some part I had had a role in forming this. I was also able to see the specific ways in which the team described and campaigned for their rights and conditions of service- those which I too had made a central plank of my management of the team. Thus, it became apparent that the collective voice had powerfully ‘come of age’.

The decision was good news: the business plan was rejected, largely because the plan itself was fundamentally flawed, and we were assured that there would be no more similar threats to deal with in future years, as private companies in search of University partnerships continued to make their claims. Before the senior team had made their decision, I had planned an Awayday in which we as a group could reflect on the crisis and what we had learnt from it. This became a celebratory event, tempered by different interpretations of our success: those who believed we had a direct and positive influence on its outcome, versus those who felt Senior Management had only conferred with us by way of appeasement and had made a decision irrespective of our input. In spite of these differences, it was important again to ‘walk away’ with an understanding of what had been learnt. As a result of our day, we drew up the following collective statement:

We the Applied Linguistics team, identified examples of good/preferred practice in our communications during the consultation process, and would like the following to be part of our practice in the future.

- Effective use of the full mailing list to involve everyone in processes
- Rapid, proactive response to challenges
- Everyone taking responsibility and assuming ownership of the process
- Individual strengths and complementary skills pulling together for the collective good : everyone contributing, and each contribution seen as valuable
- Multiple opportunities for dialogue: face to face meetings more effective than virtual meetings
- Mutual trust: working with an understanding that each individual within the team is working towards the collective good
- Prompt communication of decisions and plans that may affect the team
- Boundaries, roles and hierarchies flattened and broken down: ‘dissolving the *them and us* culture’

what is so much more important about your presence in the department is what you represent to everyone there - which is a beacon of integrity and humanity in an otherwise inhuman and miserable environment.

11.5 Joining up stories: music as metaphor

If *knowledge transformation* is to be meaningful as a concept of learning, it needs to be demonstrated through many learning settings and subject disciplines. Much of what I describe in this dissertation refers to roles expressed through language – written, spoken and metalinguistic. But here I would like to test its validity and insights through my experience as part of a musical ensemble, which forms a living metaphor for the struggles, resolutions and compromises of the team leader/manager.

Music is at bottom an expressive art, analogous to language, though it does not speak in concepts or specifics. Rather, in a semi-mystical sense, "music tends toward pure naming, the absolute unity of object and sign. (Adorno 2002:4)

Yet music does not offer only a metaphor for language. A musical ensemble (as this is) is also a microcosm of the dynamics of the team, with all its jostling for power, for voice, dichotomies between assertion and giving space to others. Importantly, too, in my own personal history, music is a major source of wellbeing. For me, it is a place where I can experience both connection and empathy. To be a musician in a world of other musicians, is to manifest these principles through sound; to learn continually from interaction with other musicians; to learn constantly to attune and sensitise one's capacity to hear others, and yet to know and remain firmly within one's own 'part' or musical voice. It is in this spirit that I conclude this chapter with the Two Timing project, performed by myself and eight other colleagues at Oxford Brookes University July 2006.

Two Timing: Cultural Criminals project, Oxford Brookes University: July 2006
(This section is to be read in conjunction with the Audio-Visual Files, 5 Music, Clip 1 – In C: Two Timing project).

This project was initiated by a group of two visual artists who joined Oxford Brookes for one year to explore the theme of time through multiple media. The culminating event of the year, was to be a multi-media musical/visual installation: a life-sized video recording on a transparent canvas, of an ensemble of musicians playing Terry Riley's *In C*; with a 'live' performance taking place as a 'ghostly echo, behind the canvas and in a-synchrony. The musical ensemble was drawn from staff and students, self-selected and thus disparate

in experience and unusual as a musical combination: flute, violin (myself), viola, guitar, two electric keyboards, harp, triangle, and drums.

We are at first a disparate group with the same enquiry: what kind of sound can we make together? Will I commit to the project, and if so, who is in with me? If I fail to commit, what am I missing? We are all team and not sure of our leader. The leader/conductor is a musical democrat. At first we believe his role is that of time-keeper only, around which we swill and move at our ease. Amongst our group are jazz players, comfortable with the practice of improvisation and playing through interaction with others, but unused to working tightly with notation, and classical musicians for whom the opposite is the case, closely committed to the composer's script and focused on freedom through discipline. We must work together but we are not sure towards which final cause. In fact, it is us that must determine what this final sound is.

Terry Riley's *In C* was written as a set of 53 musical patterns, designed for any number or combination of instruments. Each pattern consists of beats as with conventional music, the difference being that every musician chooses how many times he/she repeats the pattern, based on a sense of where the swell of sound is and whether he/she will join this or change it. Every pattern has its own unique number of beats, and each beat lasts exactly a second. Our sound, therefore, is an eruption orchestrated around the tick of a clock or beat of a heart.

We generate from this a spontaneous surge of sound based on a combination of trance within our own unit of sound (minimalist repetition of patterns), and interaction with others around us. The musical 'learning' involves:

- changing the notion of counting, from bars with an equal number of beats in each, to counting of short patterns, each of a different length, and with an infinite number of repetitions. Thus, while being in a 'trance' of repetition one must also be rigorously counting seconds, beats and patterns, in an 'unlearning' of classical training

- having no musical ‘anchor’ to determine whether one is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ and having to interpret this musically for oneself and by reading the evolving choices made by others

This, in performance, is ‘mindfulness’ manifested in sound: a joining of high alertness to other and profound journey into self, of self discovered through other. That this communicated itself is illustrated by the comments of the audience after performance: they described the chant-like, mesmerising quality of the final sound; the sense of incantation and prayer; the sense of being transported to another inner/outer place.

In this role, I find myself:

- blending into a shared sound where my ‘pattern’ imitates others
- echoing sounds and finding ‘ghost’ versions of my own musical voice elsewhere in the ensemble
- wishing to ‘breathe’ a new musical direction into the music by introducing a new pattern
- wishing to fall back and be a ‘follower’ where others have introduced a new pattern or taken the floor
- staying on a single sound that acts as a thread of continuity as other patterns move around it
- needing to ‘unlearn’ former patterns of understanding, in order to embrace new ones

As I find myself analysing the musical relationship between violin and other instruments in the ensemble, I see the metaphor of the creative educator/manager emerging: blending, echoing, directing, introducing new patterns, following, providing continuity. All of these are specific and practical ways in which it is possible to empower: I also see the process of learning made manifest through the ‘new’ sound we have created. Using Terry Riley’s patterns as a ‘scaffold’, we have owned the forms in order to build something new that is entirely of the moment and owned by each of us in the ensemble. To illustrate how unique that moment is to itself, it is then juxtaposed against a second version of our performance. These two versions, the actual as performed on stage,

and the ‘ghost’ version projected against a transparent screen, both are and are not the same. They are the same in that the scaffold is still there, the same leadership; yet they are not the same, in that we are already different from the first ‘selves’ that were filmed a week earlier. We are already interpreting the patterns in our own, and new ways. We are listening both to one another, and to our ‘other’ selves, and in so doing, generating a third ‘something new’ – today’s voice, yesterday’s voice, talking to one another to form a third voice. We are hearing one another, ourselves, Terry Riley’s patterns, and time itself differently and in new ways.

So I experienced the fluxes and tides of the team leadership experience, at one moment generating a collective voice based on professional growth, at another shifting to one of survival and territory-protection; at some times territory defined as the place where the whole team sits, at another confined to my own wellbeing inside an embattled setting. Survival was premised on the capacity to recognise this variety of options, and move between them with a sensitivity to their natural direction of flow. Through music as metaphor, it was possible to understand that deep learning transfers across the roles of manager/musician/educator. Where I as team leader blocked this learning, or resorted to those specific to leadership, I was thwarted and frustrated. Through ‘playing’ as learning, I found it possible to live these music-making decisions and skills as a manager too.

The management roles, through both health and crisis, required a precise sense of placement along the continua first described in Chapter One of this dissertation:

- ***justice versus caring***: As every writer must do, I give voice to characters who have been in conflict with my own sensibilities, in order to test and explore events fully. To provide ‘information’ from one perspective only would not only tell an incomplete story, but would not do justice to the roundedness and complexity of other viewpoints. During the ‘critical incident’ described above, there was a danger of this failing to read as ‘passionate engagement’ and falling on the wrong side of the ‘solidarity’ fault-line’. In this case, to be ***just*** to all parties was also to exercise ***caring*** for my own.

- ***impartiality versus emotional congruity and engagement.*** In other words, ***impartiality*** was read by some as a failure to be ***engaged***. As an educator/assessor, it was necessary to assess texts which were highly engaged but not always effectively communicated to the ‘other’ reader. To bring these two poles together is to say: by being impartial, I am being congruous with my own concerns for best practice and fairness.
- ***transparency versus discretion.*** As a writer, one must also identify what needs to be said, what implied or suggested, and what withheld for a later stage in the story. This same balance seemed to be in play throughout the management of the team and the critical incident which affected us. Mutual transparency of crucial information was a vital part of our success. Yet at the same time, I was party to much ‘pseudo-information’ - individual interpretations of events, speculation and hypotheses. Most of these could potentially have been dangerous in the mix of mistrust of other, and solidarity through ‘passionate engagement’. Part of the act of discretion was to separate the ‘wild cards’ from the important information, and to make the latter known at every point.

All the roles explored in this dissertation, are thus connected through the experience of paradox and opposition. The management role presented new and more publicly discernable oppositions: the female manager in a male environment, the manager of minutiae whilst working towards the larger vision, the team leader balancing democracy with decision-making and judgement. In the leader: manager role, creative response is to allow the sense of paradox and confusion to lie closely underneath or alongside the experience of forward movement,

Throughout this dissertation I have been concerned to demonstrate my core values through the voices of others: students, colleagues, family. Only through their voices can I show that transformation and empowerment of others, which are my core values, are really taking place. The management role has involved the multiple challenges described in earlier sections, of:

- enacting my core values within an entirely new sphere of influence

- testing within this sphere my core methodologies for working with and empowering others
- finding ways of making my own voice more representative and more influential as a force of good within a larger system
- finding ways of empowering my colleagues within a larger system, so they experience the system as enhancing rather than silencing their delight in the profession

This chapter has considered the nature of knowledge derived from critical incident and from challenges to the familiar; the experience of paradox as a creative tension, and the strategies and blocks in empowering others and managing change. It also shows the potential of learning across roles and categories, and the way in which understanding in one context can offer insight into the critical and challenging in another. It forms the final ‘story’ in the account of self opening out from the secret landscape of childhood, into the public and accountable one of the academy, and the tensions and interweaving of these landscapes. Chapter Twelve attempts to bring all these ‘stories’ together to explore what has been learnt throughout these chapters about *knowledge transformation* as living and embodied theory, and what messages it can offer to the academy.

Chapter Twelve Threading stories together: knowledge transformation as a living theory

What insights does this analysis offer for the academy as a whole?

This chapter will ask the question: have I fulfilled the claims I made at the start of this dissertation? The chapter will be structured around the statements made in the opening section, and will revisit them in the light of the journey travelled thus far. In so doing I return to the metaphor of the New England quilt, made up of multiple fragmented pieces, each with their own story. All together, they form “a single piece with many parts” (Chapter 2). In threading all the multiple stories of this dissertation together, do they also form a coherent and meaningful picture? Does the theory of *knowledge transformation* emerge as embodied, lived, practiced and tested? Have I fulfilled the criteria by which I chose to be judged?

12.1 Learning through reflective practice

What does it mean to be creative, as a writer, an educator, a manager and a researcher? Is the nature of creativity transferable across each of these roles?

We have looked, throughout this dissertation, at different accounts of ‘creativity’, whilst working with a broad definition of creative as ‘making something new’ (Sections 3.1, 7.1). Several key notions of the creative process have emerged in the course of this dissertation, which manifest themselves in all four roles: writer, educator, team leader, researcher.

- **Creative process as ‘finding a voice’.** Multiple voices and textual layering were explored in the notions of heteroglossia (Bakhtin 1934), idiolect and nation-language (Braithwaite 1999) (Chapters Two and Seven). These approaches to ‘voice’ formed a framework for myself as researcher in this dissertation varying voice and multiplying layers so concurrent evidence and retrospective reflection were able to ‘speak’ to one another (for example, Chapters Three and Ten). As a novelist, I explored in Chapter Four ways of shuttling between timescales, so that narrator-as-child and narrator-as-young-woman ‘spoke’ to one another using their own contrasting voices. Only through finding *their* voice was I able to fully define their character and the architecture of the novel as a whole. Similarly, these approaches formed a basis for *scaffolded creativity* in guiding students to ‘find their own voices’

(Chapter Seven), using appreciation of authorial strategy as a starting point for experimenting with it for themselves.

- **Creative process as ‘metaphorical confrontation with self’** (Cox and Thielgard 1987: 45): what Heaney described as “let(ting) down a shaft into real life” (1980: 41) . Chapters Four to Six illustrated the importance of the ‘poetic leap’ into text, in my search for authenticity as a writer, and as a writer in educational settings (Chapter Five). This ‘confrontation with self’ is also discussed from the perspective of the educator and team leader. Chapter Seven explored the value of educational activities which are authentic to one’s life processes: in this case, *teaching to write* by reflecting on *self as writer*, and making pedagogic connections between the two. In the same way as the writer might search for a perspective that is authentic to core beliefs and values, so was this an essential strategy in surviving critical incidents - as described in Chapters Ten and Eleven. In terms of the researcher role, this dissertation as a whole has attempted to ‘confront self’ and place at the heart of each chapter a ‘poetic leap’ of self into the texts and the reflections that shaped them.
- **The nature of research/information as the stimulus for creative process:** the transformational nature of *information* as a grounding for empathy and connection. Conrad described this sudden transformation of information into creative process, as catalyst: “what a student of chemistry would best understand from the analogy of the tiniest little drop of the right kind, precipitating the process of crystallisation in a test tube” (1920:6: cited in Chapter Two). Chapter Two opened the discussion by exploring the ways in which stories read as a child opened, not just fictional worlds, but empathy and awareness of the lived world; and Chapter Three showed how this lived world became a created one, in a circuit from reading to learning to creative process. This ‘chain’ of learning was also explored as an adult writer, drawing on library research and oral history as catalyst for the generation of a novel and two plays (Chapters Four and Six). Chapters Seven and Eight explored strategies as an educator, for communicating the transformational power of information through *scaffolded creativity*: knowing about language and text construction in order to grow from it. Chapters Nine and Eleven explored the ways in which new information can form a stimulus for change in practising

teachers. Here I have described the power of **delight** as a motivating drive leading to change; and that this delight can arise from contact with ideas and information that offer refreshed understanding of professional experience.

- **Creative process in which constraint and system are catalysts and sources.** Chapters Three and Seven explored the ‘chaos’ and order’ polarities in creative process, variously described as unconscious/automatic writing v. conscious, editing processes (Goldberg 1986), throwing down the clay and shaping it (Elbow 1973), and ‘exploratory’ v. ‘transformational’ creativity (Boden 2001). My own reflections in Chapters Three to Six suggested that ‘order’ and system are rarely linear or sequential, but are closely intertwined. This interweaving of system with freedom has proven valid for me in all four roles explored in this thesis. As writer, it led, for example, to the transforming of language constraints into runic system, described in Chapter Five. As an educator, it led to the notion of *scaffolded creativity*, in which the learner starts with a detailed and dynamic understanding of language as system, and is guided to transform this into their own texts. As a team leader, the essential manager: leader paradox could also be described as the paradox between creativity through constraint, and through chaos; attention to the systemic and detailed, and drive towards long-term change. The tensions between these two and attempts to resolve them through cycles of staff development, are described in Chapter Eleven. As a researcher, I have found the discipline of identifying frameworks, and working within their complex architecture, liberating and empowering. Values and criteria for judgement in the opening chapter have both shaped this dissertation, and emerged from the chaos of lived story in concurrent exchange.
- **.Creative process as connecting the specific and the universal**, moving from a single point to an all-embracing one, as described by the Turkish Nobel prizewinner Pamuk: “when a writer shuts himself up in a room for years on end, with this gesture he suggests a single humanity, a world without a centre.” (Pamuk 2006: 17 and cited in Chapter Six). Chapter Four describes the tension between this honouring of the specific, and desire to give it symbolic life, in my role as writer. As a researcher, it has been important to recognize the role of the specific examples I describe, in connecting with larger questions. I invite the ‘compassionate leap’ of the reader to recognize these stories as part of the larger human story, and deriving from an honest

account of this. It has been my challenge to extract the global and transferable from the detailed and specific, whilst recognizing the ‘fallacy of induction’ in making too large a claim.

- **Creative process as the embracing of paradox** was suggested in Chapter Eleven, the possibility of holding several truths simultaneously. Several of the creative processes described above, are also parallel truths which are held side by side: as a writer one must balance the specific and the symbolic (as described in Chapter Four). As a teacher one must balance the role of empowering the individual, with the role of preparing the individual for public and accountable success; assessment as the bridge between individual learning and external validation (see Chapters Eight and Nine). As a manager, Chapter Eleven explored (amongst others) the tensions of the different ‘belonging’ communities, and the paradox of being ‘other’ whilst campaigning for equity and healing of division within the team.
- **Creative process as ‘generative’** : Senge’s distinction between ‘reactive/survival learning’ and ‘generative learning’ was intended to describe the ‘learning organisation’ (Senge 1990, 2000), but in Chapter Eleven I adopted it as a framework for my own individual learning as a manager. ‘Generative learning’ and the journey towards it, involves, in my own interpretation, the creation of principles which can be transferred from context to context, from one medium to another. It is generative learning of this kind which has enabled me to identify the creative processes listed above: these processes have worked across roles and contexts, and have emerged from them. The management role has involved an appreciation of the tensions between long-term vision and adapting to the immediate and urgent. My own ‘generative’ strategy was to join part and whole, present and future, colleague and colleague, individual growth and team growth. This same balance between ‘reacting to the moment’ and ‘generating something new’ formed part of the action research cycle for teachers, developed in my role as teacher educator and described in Chapter Nine. Here teachers were guided to extract from the detail of local difficulty and complexity, the core of what they valued as good practice, and generative principles for arriving at this.

- **Creative process as capable of development, nurturing and ‘scaffolding’.**

This research has illustrated the fact that understanding the ‘machinery’ of the creative process can help to drive it more energetically forward. As an educator it has been

important for me to anatomise the skills and knowledges I mean by ‘creative’ in order to frame it for others; as a writer it has been important for me to deconstruct what I have practiced intuitively since childhood, in order to understand what it is that continues to drive and shape me as a writer. In this enterprise I have been able to arrive at an understanding of my own values as a writer, and to recognize a commitment to perpetual self-improvement as a driving principle (Section 3.3).

- **Creative process as *doing something* in the world.**

This dissertation premises that the creative process *does something* in the world because it *makes something happen*: growth in self-esteem, in knowledge of self or other, in curiosity and purpose; improved practice in the classroom, a shift within a team from teachers to teachers-as-researchers, a shift amongst learners from readers to reader:writers.

In 2005 I wrote a ‘found poem’ about Dartmoor wild flowers in danger of extinction; the poem was published in the New Age journal *Resurgence*, where it was ‘found’ and read by the friend who had first introduced me to that particular part of Dartmoor. Art *does* something, in forming chains of thought, empathy and connection, and whether tiny or large, these add incrementally to the quantum of positive change.

See Appendix Reading 9 for text of poem.

12.2 Learning about learning: knowledge transformation as deep learning

My examination leads to a theory of learning called ‘knowledge transformation’, which suggests that deep learning leads to change of both the learner and what is learnt. It explores how educational objectives can lead to deep learning and positive change.

The dissertation has also attempted to demonstrate *knowledge transformation* in practice, and offer evidence for its value as a description of learning. The examples explored in this dissertation, suggest that the catalyst for this transformation is the experience of delight/engagement/wellbeing. These were the essential drivers that effected change. Leonard asks the question:” what is the goal, what is the purpose of education?” His answer is: "the achievement of moments of ecstasy." (ibid 1968: 17) According to Leonard, "the master teacher is one who pursues delight." (ibid 1968: 232) "To follow ecstasy in learning in spite of injustice, suffering, confusion and

disappointment is to move easily toward an education, a society that would free the enormous potential of man." (ibid 1968: 234) This dissertation honours this view and offers the following examples of delight at the heart of learning as transformation:

Knowledge transformation as a writer

As a writer, examples in this dissertation have shown the way lived story and information transform into created story. The child's spontaneous and unconscious 'flow' between these lived and learnt stimuli and their creative reshaping is demonstrated in Chapter Three. Cropley (2001) describes *information* as the first in a ladder of creative maturation. Whilst I suggest that information can indeed be a starting point, the process I am aiming to uncover is more transformatory than Cropley suggests. Whilst his stage of maturation is *verification of experience*, mine is personal, practical or intellectual change. For example: learning the bamboo pipe as a child (described in Chapter Three) involved the transformation of knowledge into the pedagogic music book and my discovery of self as future educator. Concurrent with this, was the transformation of the experience into a transferable musicality, and a lifelong practice playing the violin. In Chapter Four, I describe my first 'learning' about Poland was the experience of 'feeling'/empathy in encountering the memorial wall. For a lifetime I had lived amongst the Polish émigré community without engaging with the specificity of their experience. What triggered a compassion/passion for their story, was exposing myself to a tiny portion of it in my own experience, and being changed by this. The 'change' led to frequent further visits to Poland, writing the oral history of my uncle's story, and the writing of a novel described in Chapter Four.

Knowledge transformation as an educator

As an educator, it emerged that students who transformed linguistic and textual understanding into the most effective new voices of their own, experienced a sense of the *self-worth* and *worth* of the exercise (Chapter Eight). Student teachers evaluated their experience on these creative writing workshops with comments such as: "this workshop is a new window to my teaching"; "(Jane) removed many of our fears and former ideas and replaced them with excitement, imagination and practical ways to bring creative writing and language development to our students"; "she has not only showed me the varieties of creative writing that can be done with our students, she has

also led me to a brand new world where we ourselves can be creative”. **(Please see student evaluations in Appendix Reading 13).**

As a teacher educator, it was possible to trace through the action research cycle, the difference between knowledge that was simply recognised, and knowledge that was *transformed* into change. Teachers who had experienced deep learning through this cycle, also described the fact that they looked differently at their own practice and were able to *do something new* as a result (Chapter Nine). Evaluations from teachers included: “Before I came here, I was sitting in front of my students. Yet now I can streightly stand up facing my students.” (sic)

Knowledge transformation as a team leader

Chapter Ten explored my goals as Head of Applied Linguistics, in terms of the wish to effect positive transformation alongside the complexity of daily management. It was of concern to me, that this transformation be experienced as meaningful and grounded for each individual in the team. The team and individual testimonies in Chapter Eleven suggested that transformation had been achieved for at least one sector of the team; those who had contractual stability. The team/individual learning cycles had effected tangible change in their research involvement, empathy for the work of others in the team, engagement in joint enquiries and the wider professional arena, sense of security, status and identity.

My own capacity to set these transformations in motion itself evolved through transformation. Chapters Ten and Eleven explored a cycle of reflections in response to crisis. The chapters aimed to show that the ‘learning’ from the first crisis offered insights for the second crisis, and led to tangible change in strategy. The negative models described in Chapter Ten were also transformed into positive guidance in my arrival to the role of Head of Applied Linguistics: un-ease was transformed into the knowledge of “what NOT to do”, with *self* fully investing in this change, and doing so on behalf of others also.

Knowledge transformation as a researcher

Section 12.1 above described the ‘poetic leap’ of self into this dissertation: thus, the engagement/delight which has made its completion possible under the following conditions. During the 5-year process of writing this dissertation:

- I changed my job three times.
- I was at risk of redundancy twice
- I moved twice.
- I was ‘camping’ during weekdays for 3 ½ years on a 60-foot narrowboat.
- The notes, files, books and manuscripts for this dissertation were scattered across three workplaces 180 miles apart, and at no time were in one place
- The longest consecutive period for prioritising this dissertation above work and family, was one 9-day period in May 2007

The dissertation writing has only been sustainable, because the process has run alongside my roles as educator/writer/manager. Change in one sphere has become change in the other. This has given the research process authenticity and impetus. As I recognised the validity of the ‘poetic leap of self’ into this research, it became possible to work towards more honest and more focused reflection, directly honed and tested within my everyday work and practice. Some of these were retrospective reflections ON action - returning to projects which preceded the writing of this dissertation, such as the writing of my novel, and asking new questions about the process; some were reflections IN action - accounting for my management experience as it evolved, or probing more rigorously my own values as they emerge in the assessment process. Part of my learning has involved a recognition of the connection between retrospective and concurrent learning; and also, the connection between experiencing actions, and acting as an interpreter of the actions. I have both remained deeply within the many projects described here, and hovered above and between them in search of drives, values, new understandings. Learning from practice *became* writing for research, and in this way it has been possible to transform lived practice into researched enquiry.

Music as metaphor for knowledge transformation

Chapter Eleven offered the example of music as a metaphor for knowledge transformation.

As I find myself analysing the musical relationship between violin and other instruments in the ensemble, I see the metaphor of the creative educator/manager emerging: blending, echoing, directing, introducing new patterns, following, providing continuity.
(Section 11.8)

I offer here a second example of learning/un-learning/re-learning made tangible through sound. Here, I am part of a violin and piano ensemble, and we are performing at a public masterclass at Dartington International Music Summer School 2006. This is the first time since my undergraduate student years (when I was also attending music school once a week), that I have performed solo in public.

See Audio-Visual Files 5. Music/Massenet

The example starts with a performance of our chosen piece, Massenet's *Meditation de Thais*. This first version reveals my own nerves at performing publicly, and a moment where I and the pianist become disconnected. Some of the notes are wobbly and insecure, and I am aware that I am prioritising my own exposure as performer over the music itself. I am also aware that in the intensity of self-preservation, I am not paying full attention to the pianist, the other crucial half of the ensemble. This first performance is followed by conversation with the teacher, a pianist and accompanist in her own right. We talk through the mechanisms of nerves and its impact on musicians and discuss the way musicians can support and maintain contact with one another. I confess to the audience that this is my first solo in public for many years, and I used a strategy discussed earlier by the teacher, to 'build a bubble' in which I could be safe. The disadvantage of the 'bubble' is its disconnection with audience and importantly, with fellow musicians. We also discussed where and how pauses and 'rubato' took place and how these could work better so the variations in intensity could be clearer. In the second performance, some of this discussion had been internalised. In the act of confessing my nerves, and hearing the audience's supportive laughter, the separating bubble had evaporated and I felt aware of the audience's presence as a communicative energy rather than as a threat. I am also aware of listening more acutely for and with my pianist, and in this, the music becomes more powerful than my own presence inside it. It is possible to *feel* the music instead of *playing* it, and to understand *physically* the 'holding back' and the

building of intensity. Here I am aware of the parallels between this and the points discussed above: of retrospective and concurrent learning intertwined, learning **from** past action, and learning **through** the action itself. I am also aware of the fragility of the balance between **I** at the centre, and **I** in connection with other. Without a continuous fine-tuning of the I : thou interconnection the music literally ‘falls apart’. Most crucially, I am aware that the act of living what one has learnt entails risk and exposure. The difference between *learning about performance*, and *performing*, is also the difference between theory and ***lived theory***.

12.3 Learning from multiple roles

My journey towards and with this theory draws on my experience of four personae, the creative writer in and outside the academy, and the educator, team leader, and researcher within it; and explores the strategies and issues raised by bringing these roles and intelligences together.

It is as a researcher I have brought together multiple roles and recognised their synergies. Through the process of recounting stories in each role, a number of strategies emerge, as both knowledge base and catalyst for change. I have found myself responding to challenge in the following ways:

- Recording the situation, fully and unequivocally, including the details which appear petty or dull. Never predicting which details hindsight will find useful or interesting.
- Deconstructing the situation, by identifying its parts and components: the people and their relationships, the social/physical/cultural environment and its impact, the cycles of cause and effect.
- Establishing a distance from the first situation, turning it into a metaphor, or a symbol. The people inside it are not only themselves, but they represent others too.
- At the same time, I am establishing multiple relevance. I am seeing that the smallest incident, memory or glimpse, is after all relevant to this situation. It has helped to build up the cycle of cause and effect, or to generate the unique ‘patina’ of the situation.

- Making the situation travel: where will it go next? What will happen next? Pushing the situation away from its starting point and on to a new destination, in which everything is changed.
- Visualising the changed situation: where I would like it, ideally, to go, and the stages it will need to pass through in order to get there. In the visualised version, all the ingredients I started with have changed their alignments, even if these are tiny, subtle, and imperceptible.

Further ‘crossover’ strategies emerged from my examples of music as metaphor at the end of this dissertation. The principles learnt, transformed into sound and transferred into other contexts, include:

- Being capable of perpetual adaptability to constant changes:
- Whilst being adaptable, remaining with one’s ‘part’
- Being in a state of constant ‘hearing’: so one is prepared to review goals and their viability, reflect on beliefs and their value in action
- Hearing the parts in relation to the whole:
- Hearing self in relation to other
- Living what has been learnt, and taking risks in order to continue learning

12.4 Clarifying values and resolving paradox

It also explores how values can be clarified in the course of their emergence and formed into living standards of judgment.

In Chapter One I suggested paradoxes or polarities within each of the four roles threaded through this dissertation. In practice, it has been necessary to find a position in response to each of these polarities, and to confront core values which drive each choice. These core values were explained in Section 1.4, as: **wellbeing, empathy, connection, empowerment and authenticity.**

Resolving paradox through understanding values

The creative writer

Chapter One suggested the following polarities: writer as *creative commentator deriving inspiration from the world* alongside writer as *dreamer, whose inspiration and outcomes are disconnected with the 'real world'*.

To position myself between these polarities is to make the following core values explicit:

connection: connection between past and present, the specific and the universal, I and Thou/self and other. To connect has also required the capacity to understand connections - what I have identified for myself as **empathy:** travelling outside the ego and entering into the social, cultural, and psychological realities of others. As a writer, my own positioning becomes clear: I write in order to engage with or interpret the real world. I write in order to connect with others. I write in order to travel outside my own ego and empathetically *become* 'they'. My alternative universe IS a reaching out to and inclusion of the world as I see it.

The educator

I identified in Chapter One the following polarities in the educator role: *educator as mentor, guide, facilitator* alongside *educator as assessor, judge, and authority*.

My discussions in Chapters Eight and Nine have sought to claim the position: there is no paradox between educator as mentor/facilitator, and educator as assessor.

Assessment can and should be a process of learning and facilitation, and it is the educator's responsibility to make it so. In this, I am expressing my core value of **empowerment:** *My role as educator is to provide a rich environment that empowers learners to find and express their own voice*. The assessment instruments I have described work towards forming a bridge between the voice of the learner and external objectives of success: to make this bridge, both the learners are transformed, and the assessment instrument which judges them.

The team leader/manager

Again, Chapter One suggested the following polarity in the manager's role: *one who facilitates and enhances the professional self-esteem and effectiveness of others, one who prioritises **where we are going*** alongside *one who controls and manages the local, current: one who prioritises **where we are now***.

My experience as team leader has enabled me to arrive at the following position:

Where we are now needs to serve and lead to *where we are going*. Small and local changes need to serve the larger picture of individual and team growth. In this is included my own learning as team leader. For this to come about, I need to preserve my own **wellbeing** as a human being, and be **authentic** to my own beliefs as an educator.

The educational researcher

Chapter One suggested the following paradox: the educational researcher *places I at the centre of enquiry* alongside the researcher who *places **they** at the centre of enquiry, and seeks objectivity by distancing from self,*

My own position has been explored at several points in this chapter, but can be summarised as follows: the educational researcher places I at the centre in terms of authenticity and confrontation with self: whilst striving at the same time to interpret and connect, and to articulate insights in a way that is meaningful and accountable to others.

12.5 Have I fulfilled my own criteria for success? If so, why is this of significance?

Section 1.7 offered three specific criteria by which I wished to be judged. In returning to these criteria I shall reformulate them as claims to significance.

Has my creative writer/educator/manager role generated actual change?

The dissertation has aimed to show that the interweaving of creative writer/educator/manager roles has generated actual change. Creative writer knowledge has led to teaching activities, resources, assessments, revised curriculum on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Similarly the educator/team leader roles have informed one another such that my team and individuals within it record specific experiences of positive change. Since these processes of change are theorised and have led to generative principles, I offer these to the academy as a contribution to the search for good practice.

In threading all the multiple stories of this dissertation together, do they form a coherent and meaningful picture?

In threading all the multiple stories of this dissertation together, my hope is that they form a coherent and meaningful picture of transformation through deep learning: and in so doing, contribute to definitions of deep learning. My own position is that “deep learning leads to change of both the learner and what is learnt” and I have attempted to demonstrate this both through my own examples of transformation, and those of learners, teacher students and colleagues within a team.

Does the theory of *knowledge transformation* emerge as embodied, lived, practiced and tested?

In the course of arriving at this theory, have I improved my practice?

I have attempted to reveal *knowledge transformation* as embodied, lived, practiced and tested, by exploring its validity in a wide number of contexts. I have also arrived at the insight that perpetual self-improvement has been for me an aspect of what it is to be creative. This self-improvement can now be crystallised in the following understanding; that to improve one’s practice is to transform experience into something new, and to engage continually in an exploration both of the experience itself and its capacity to transform.

I feel that such a theory is significant because it connects educational strategies and life strategies, and explores the congruity between them. It is also significant because it questions the assertions often made in the name of educational validity, and claims a connection between

- education and deep learning (Bloom 1956)
- education and creativity (Pope 2005)
- education and the capacity for change (Abbs 2003)
- education and life skills (Creative Partnerships 2007)
- education and core beliefs (Rogers 1990, Johnston 2003)

Finally, I believe my study is significant because it offers evidence of the life-changing potential of learning when connected with creativity, or *making something new*.

Bibliography

- Abbs, P. (1994) *The Educational Imperative: A Defence of Socratic and Aesthetic Learning* London and Washington DC: Falmer Press
- Abbs, P. (2003) *Against the Flow: education, the arts and postmodern culture* London, RoutledgeFalmer
- ACAS (2002) *Redundancy Handling* retrieved March 26th 2003 from <http://www.acas.org.uk/publications/B08.html>
- Achebe, C. (1986) *African Perspectives : Interview with Fiona Ledger* retrieved July 27th 2004 from BBC World Service
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour/audiointerviews/profilepages/achebec1.shtml>
- Adorno, T.W. (2002) *Essays on Music* in R. Leppert (ed.) trans. S.H.Gillespie, Berkeley: University of California Press
- Agard, J. (1982) *Man and Pan* Casa de las Americas
- Agard, J. (2005) *Half-caste* London: Hodder and Stoughton
- Agard, J. *Listen Mr. Oxford Don* in Agard, J. (1985) *Mangoes and Bullets: Selected and New Poems 1972 – 84* London: Pluto Press
- Alderson, J.C. (2000) *Assessing Reading* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Allende, I. (2007) In Giving I Connect in J.Allison and D. Gediman *This I Believe* New York: Holt : 13-15
- Allison, J. and Gediman, D. (2007) *This I Believe: the personal philosophies of remarkable men and women* New York: Holt
- Allott, M. (1959) *Novelists on the Novel* London: Routledge
- Amichai, Y. (trans.Y. Amichai and T. Hughes) (1978) *Amen poems* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Anderson, C.M. and MacCurdy, M.M. (2000) *Writing and Healing* National Council of Teachers of English Urbana, Illinois US
- Angwin, R. (1994) *Riding the Dragon: myth and the inner journey* Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element
- Angwin, R. (2005) *Writing the Bright Moment* Devon, UK: Fire in the Head

Anon (no date) *O Behemoth* in *The Holy Bible*, Book of Job Chapter XL verses 15 - 24 Oxford: Oxford University Press

Anon (1989) *The Magnificent Bull* in Heath, R.B. (ed.) *Tradewinds* Burnt Mill, Harlow: Longman : 104

Anon (1970 ed.) *The Blacksmiths* in Sisam, K. (ed) *Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose* Oxford: Oxford University Press : 169

Aoki, N., H. Sunami, Li, X. and Kinoshita, M. (2004) Teachers' conversations with partial autobiographies in *The Teacher Trainer* Vol. 18, No. 3 Autumn 2004 : 3 - 5

Appel, J. (1995) *Diary of a Language Teacher* Oxford: Heinemann

ARG (Assessment Reform Group) (2002) *Assessment for Learning* retrieved May 26th 2007 from www.aaia.org.uk/pdf/Assessment_for_Learning.pdf

Aristotle (1965) *On the Art of Poetry* in T.S. Dorsch (trans.) *Classical Literary Criticism* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books: 29 - 76

Ashcroft, B. et. al. (eds.) (2000) *The Postcolonial Studies Reader* London: Routledge

Astley, N. (2002) ed. *Staying Alive* Tarsnet, Northumberland: Bloodaxe Books

Attridge, D. (2005) *The Singularity of Literature* London: Routledge

Atweh, B, Kemmis, S. and Weeks. P. (eds) (1998) *Action Research in Practice: Partnership for Social Justice in Education* London: Routledge

Austin, T. (2003) *Finding Treasures in the Snow* PhD thesis unpublished University of Bath

Bailey, K.M. and Nunan, D. (Eds.) (1996) *Voices from the Language Classroom* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Bakhtin, M.M. (2001) *Discourse in the Novel* translated by C. Emerson and M. Holquist in Bakhtin, M.M. and Holquist, M. (2001) *The Dialogic Imagination: Four essays* Austin: University of Texas Press

Balshaw, M. (2004) Risking creativity: building the creative context in *Support for Learning* 19 (2): 71 - 76

Banaji, S. and Burn, A with Buckingham, D. (2006) *The Rhetorics of Creativity: a review of the literature* Centre for the Study of Children, Youth and Media Institute of Education, University of London: Arts Council England

- Bann, S. and Bowlt, J.E. (1974) *Russian Formalism* New York: Barnes and Noble
- Barthes, R. (1996) *Introduction to the Structural Analysis of the Narrative* Occasional paper, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies Birmingham: University of Birmingham
- Bartram, Sharon (2005) What is wrong with current approaches to management development in relation to women in management roles? in *Women in Management Review*, Vol. 20. no.2 2005 : 107 – 116
- Bassey, M. (1992) Creating Education through Research in *British Educational Journal* Vol. 18, no. 1 : 3 – 16
- Bassey, M (1998) Fuzzy generalisations: an approach to building educational theory Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual conference Queens University Belfast 7th – 30th August 1998 retrieved October 2007 from <http://leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents00000801.htm>
- Bassey, M. (2001) A Solution to the Problem of Generalisation in Education Research: Fuzzy Prediction *Oxford Review of Education* March 2001
- Bates, M. (1999) *Poetry as a Foreign Language* East Lothian: White Adder Press
- Baylis, N. and Morris, I. (2006) *The Skills of Well-being* Wellington College PHSE Department
- Bell, J. (1995) *Teachers Talk about Teaching* Milton Keynes: Open University Press
- Ben Peretz, M. (1995) *Learning from experience: memory and the teacher's account of teaching* University of New York Press, Albany NY
- Bennett, L. (1996) *Colonization in Reverse* in J. Thieme *Post-colonial Literatures* London and New York: Arnold : 844 - 845
- Bernstein, L. (2007) The Mountain Disappears in J. Allison and D. Gediman (2007) *This I Believe* New York: Holt: 19 - 21
- Bettelheim, B. (1988 ed.) *The Uses of Enchantment* Harmondsworth: Penguin
- Biesta, G.J. J. (2006) *Beyond Learning: Democratic Education for a Human Future* Boulder: Paradigm Publishers
- Birdwhistell, D.M. (2000) Creativity with 3rd and 5th Graders: The effects of standards of production and extrinsic rewards in *Washington and Lee Journal of Science* 1 (2) <http://journalofscience.wlu.edu/archive/Spring2000/Creativity.html>

- Birnbaum, P. (1964) *A Book of Jewish Concepts* New York: Hebrew Publishing Co.
- Black, C. (2005) Issues regarding the facilitation of teacher research in *Reflective Practice*, vol. 6 no. 1, Feb, 2005 : 107 – 122
- Black, P, and William, D. (1998) *Inside the black box* Assessment Reform Group (ARG) : Nuffield Foundation
- Bloom, B. S. (1956) *Taxonomy of educational objectives: Classification of educational goals. Handbook I: Cognitive domain* New York: McKay
- Boden, M. (1990) *The Creative Mind: Myths and Mechanisms* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson
- Boden, M.A. (2001) Creativity and knowledge in A.Craft, B.Jeffrey and M.Leibling (eds.) *Creativity in Education* London and New York: Continuum : 95 - 102
- Bohm, D. (1998) *On Creativity* Routledge: London
- Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of Judgement and Taste* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- Braithwaite, E.K. (1999) Nation Language in Ashcroft, B. et. al. (eds.) (2000) *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* Routledge, London
- Breen, M. (1997) A pragmatics of language teaching: from practice to principles in Kumaravadivelu, B. and Gass, S. (eds.) *Beyond methods: New perspectives in second and foreign language education* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press .
- Breen, M.P, B.Hird, Milton, M., Oliver, R. and Thwaite, A. (2001) Making Sense of Language Teaching: Teachers principles and Classroom Practices in *Applied Linguistics* 22/4 Oxford: Oxford University Press : 470 - 501
- Brown, H.D. (2000 ed.) *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* London: Longman
- Brown, L.D. (ed.) (2002) *Practice-research engagement and civil society in a globalizing society*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University/Hauser Centre
- Bruner, J. (1990) *Acts of Meaning* Cambridge, Mass. USA, Harvard University Press
- Bruner, J. (2002) *Making Stories* New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux
- Bryman, A. (1988) *Quantity and Quality in Social Research* London: Routledge

- Buber, Martin (1998) (originally published 1965) *The Knowledge of Man* Humanity Books Amherst, New York
- Buckingham, D. (2003) Living in a Young Culture? Youthful Creativity and Cultural Policy in the United Kingdom in K.M. and S. Pearce *Youth Cultures: Texts, Images and Identities* Westport Connecticut, London Praeger: 92 – 107
- Buckingham, D. and Jones, K. (2001) New Labour's cultural turn: some tensions in contemporary educational and cultural policy in *Journal of Education Policy* 16.1: 1 - 14
- Bullough, R.V. and Pinnegar, S. (2001) Guidelines for Quality in Autobiographical Forms of Self Study: in *Educational Researcher* vol. 30 (3): 13 - 22
- Businessballs.com *Johari window model of awareness and group relationships* retrieved 24th July 2007 from <http://www.businessballs.com/johariwindowmodel.htm>
- Cahill, M. (2007) *My Living Educational Theory of Inclusional Practice* PhD University of Limerick retrieved Dec. 11th 2007 from <http://www.jeanmcniff.com>
- CAPE (2004) *Young Roots, Your Roots: creativity, schools and community cohesion - how to give children a voice* CAPE UK: 29
- Carruthers, P. (2002) Human creativity: its cognitive basis, its evolution, and its connection with childhood pretence in *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 53 (2): 225 - 249
- Carson, T.R. and Sumara, D.J. (ed.) (1997) *Action Research as a Living Practice* New York: Peter Laing
- Carter, R. (2005) *Language and Creativity: the art of common talk* London: RoutledgeFalmer
- Carter, R. (2006) Is there a literary language?. In Goodman, S. and K.O'Halloran (eds.) *The art of English: literary creativity* Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan/Open University: 84 - 88
- Caughlan, S. (2005) Considering Pastoral Power: a commentary on Aaron Schutz's Rethinking Domination and Resistance: Challenging postmodernism , in *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 34, no. 2 March 2005 : 14 - 16
- Chapman, A (2007) *1995 – 2006 adaptation, review and code based on Ingham and Luft's original johari window concept* retrieved 24th July 2007 from <http://www.businessballs.com/johariwindowmodel.htm>

- Childs, D. and Wharton, J. (1989) *Children in War* Institute of German, Austrian and Swiss Affairs, University of Nottingham
- Clandinin, D.J. and Connelly, F.M. (2000) *Narrative inquiry: experience and story in qualitative research* Jossey-Bass
- Clifford, J. and Marcus, G. (eds) (1986) *Writing Culture: the Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* Berkeley: University of California Press
- Coates, J. (1996) *Women Talk* Oxford: Blackwells
- Cocteau, J. (1952) The Process of Inspiration in B.Ghiselin *The Creative Process* New York: New American Library : 81
- Coghlan, D. and Brannick, D. (2000) *Doing Action Research as a Living Practice* New York Peter Lang
- Conrad, J. (1920) Author's note in Conrad, J. (1993 ed.) *The Secret Agent* Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth
- Cortazzi, M. (2000) Languages, cultures, and cultures of learning in the global classroom in W.K. Ho and C. Ward (eds.) *Language in the Global Context: implications for the language classroom* Singapore: SEAMEO RELC : 75 – 103
- Cortazzi, M. (2006) Asking Questions, Sharing Stories and Identity Construction: socio-cultural issues in narrative research in S. Trahar (ed.) *Narrative Research on Learning: comparative and international perspectives* Oxford: Symposium Books : 25 - 43
- Coveney, P. and Highfield, R. (1995) *Frontiers of Complexity: The Search for Order in a Chaotic World* London: Faber and Faber
- Cox, M. and A. Thielgard (1987) *Mutative Metaphors in Psychotherapy: the Aeolian mode*. London: Tavistock
- Craft, A. (2000) *Teaching Creativity: Philosophy and Practice* London and New York: Routledge
- Craft, A. (2001) *An Analysis of Research and Literature on Creativity in Education* Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA): 1- 37
- Creative Partnerships (2007) *Preferred Learning Styles and Creativity Action Research programme* retrieved December 10th 2007 from <http://www.creative-partnerships.com/content/gdocs/plstheory.pdf>
- Cropley, A.J. (2001) *Creativity in Education and Learning* London and Sterling: Kogan Page

Cummings e e *In Just* in (4th edition) *Norton Anthology of American Literature Vol. 2* New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company : 144 -145

Damasio, A. (2000) *The Feeling of What Happens: Body, Emotion and the Making of Consciousness* London: Vintage

D Arcy, Pat *The Whole Story* PhD thesis retrieved March 24th 2004 from <http://www.bath.ac.uk/edsjaw/pat.shtml>

Day, G, Sammons, P., Kington, A. and Quing G. (2007) *Teachers Matter* Milton Keynes: Open University Press

Day, R.R. and Bamford, J. (1998) *Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Delong, J. (2002) How can I improve my practice as a superintendent of schools and create my own living educational theory? PhD University of Bath retrieved Oct. 16th 2005 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/delong.shtml>

Deneulin, S. & Townsend, N. (2006) *Public Goods, Global Public Goods and the Common Good* WeD Working Paper 18, ESRC Research Group on Wellbeing in Developing Countries retrieved 17 October 2006 from <http://www.welldev.org.uk/research/workingpaperpdf/wed18.pdf>

Denning, S. (2000) *The Springboard: How Storytelling Ignites Action in Knowledge-Era Organizations* Boston and London: Butterworth Heinemann

Denzin, N.K. (1997) *Interpretative Ethnography: Ethnographic practices for the 21st century* Thousand Oaks: Sage

DES (2004) *Excellence and Enjoyment and Creating Conditions for Learning* London: Department for Education and Skills

Desforges, D. (2001) *Putting Educational Research to Use through Knowledge Transformation* London Learning and Skills Development Agency retrieved 16th November 2006 from http://eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=RecordDet

Doecke B., Horner, D. and Nixon, H. (2003) *English Teachers at Work: Narratives, Counter Narratives and Arguments* Australian Association for the Teaching of English. Kent Town, Australia: Wakefield Press

Eagleton, T. (1983) *Literary Theory: an introduction* Oxford: Basil Blackwell,

- Ecclestone, K. (2007) Resisting images of the diminished self: the implications of emotional well-being and emotional engagement in educational policy in *Journal of Education Policy* 22, 4: 445-470
- Edge, J. & Richards, K. (eds.) (1993) *Teachers develop teachers research* Oxford: Heineman
- Edge, Julian (2002) *Continuing co operative Development: a discourse framework for individuals as colleagues* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press
- Eisner, E. (2005) *Reimagining Schools* Abingdon: Routledge
- Eisner, E. (1988) The Primacy of Experience and the Politics of Method in *Educational Researcher*: Vol. 17, no. 5 : 15 – 20
- Eisner, E. (1993) The Promise and Perils of Alternative Forms of Data Representation in *Educational Researcher*: Vol. 26, no. 6 : 4 – 10
- Eisner, E. (1996) Forms of Understanding the Future of Educational Research in *Educational Researcher*: Vol. 22, no. 7 : 5 – 11
- Elbaz, F. (1992) Hope, attentiveness and caring for difference: the moral voice in teaching in *Teaching and Teacher Education* 8 : 421- 432
- Elbow, P. (1973) *Writing without Teachers* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Elbow, P. (1986) *Embracing Contraries: explorations in learning and teaching* Oxford : Oxford University Press
- ESRC Research Group (2005) *Wellbeing in Developing Countries* retrieved 4th May 2006 from www.welldev.org.uk/research/
- FEAP (2006) *Faculty and Employee Assistance: Critical Incidents* University of Virginia Health System retrieved 12th September 2007 from <http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/feap/critical-incident>
- Feinstein, D. and Krippner, S. (1989) *Personal Mythology* London, Sydney and Wellington: Unwin Paperbacks
- Feldman, A. (2003) Validity and Quality in Self Study in *Educational Researcher*, vol. 32, no. 3 : 26 to 28
- Feldman, W.M. (1927) *The Jewish Child* Balliere, Tindall and Cox
- Finke, R.A. (1996) 'Imagery, creativity and emergent structure' *Consciousness and Cognition* 5/3: 381 – 393

- Fisher, D., Rooke, D. & Torbert, W.R. (2000) *Personal and organisational transformations: through action inquiry* Boston MA: Edge/Work Press
- Flammer, A., Leiser, M. and Barreaux, G. (1985) *Chansons Yiddish: Tendresses et Rage* Paris: Radio France harmonia mundi
- France, L. (1998) *If love was Jazz* in Astley, Neil (ed.) (1998) *Poetry with an Edge* Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe : 316
- Freeman, D. and Richards, J. (1996) *Teacher Learning in Language Teaching* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Fukuyama, F. (1992) *The End of History and the Last Man* London: Penguin
- Furlong, J. and Oancea, A. (2005) *Assessing Quality in Applied and Practice based Educational Research: a framework for discussion* retrieved January 10th 2006 from <http://www.bera.ac.uk/pdfs/Qualitycriteria.pdf>.
- Gale, K. (2001) Teacher Education within Post-Compulsory Education and Training: A Call for a Creative Approach in Craft, A., B. Jeffrey and M. Leibling (2001) *Creativity in Education* London and New York: Continuum : 103 – 115
- Geake, J. G. (2007) Neural Interconnectivity and intellectual creativity: giftedness, savants and learning styles in T. Blachin & B. Hymer (eds) *Companion to Gifted Education* London: Routledge
- Geake, J.G. (2006) The neurological basis of intelligence: a contrast with ‘brain-based’ education. *Education-Line* retrieved December 12th 2007 from <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/156074.htm>
- Geertz, C. (1983) *Local Knowledge* New York: Basic Books
- Genette, G. (1980) *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* Oxford: Blackwell
- Gergen, K. (1991) *The Saturated Self* New York: Basic Books
- Gersh, H. (1986) *When a Jew Celebrates* West Orange: Behrman House Inc.
- Gersie, A. and King, N. (1990) *Storymaking in Education and Therapy* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Ghiselin, B. (1952) *The Creative Process* New York: New American Library
- Goldberg, N. (1986) *Writing down the Bones* Boston, Mass: Shambhala Publications

- Goodman, S. and O'Halloran, K. (2006) *The art of English: literary creativity* Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan/Open University
- Goodson, I.F. (ed.) (1992) *Studying Teachers' Lives* London, Routledge
- Gorges, A. (1999) *Her Face* in McRae, J. and M. Vethamani (eds.) (1999) *Now Read On: A Course in Multicultural Reading* London: Routledge
- Gosling, J. and Mintzberg, H. (2003) The Five Minds of a Manager in *Harvard Business Review*, November 2003
- Grainger, T, K. Goouch and Lambirth, A. (2005) *Creativity and Writing: Developing Voice and Verse in the Classroom* London and New York: Routledge
- Griffin, M.L. (2003) Using Critical Incidents to Promote and Assess Reflective Thinking in Preservice Teachers in *Reflective Practice* vol. 4 no. 2 : 207 - 220
- Habermas, J. (1976) *Communication and the Evolution of Society* London: Heinemann
- Halevi, Z. ben Shimon (1986) *Kabbalah and Psychology* Bath, Avon: Gateway Books
- Hall, C., E. Hall and Leech, A. (1990) *Scripted Fantasy in the Classroom* London: Nichols Publishing
- Harland, T. and Plangger, A. (2004) The Postgraduate Chameleon: changing roles in doctoral education in *Active Learning in Higher Education* Vol. 5 no. 1 March 2004 : 73 – 86
- Hartley, L.P. (1958) *The Go-Between* London: Penguin
- Harvey, M. (1999) *What Colour's Your Inner Tube?* in Harvey, M. (1999) *Standing up To Be Counted Out* Dart Valley Press, Dart Mills, Buckfastleigh, Devon : 1
- Hayles, N. (1991) *Chaos and Order; Complex Dynamics in Literature and Science* Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Heaney, S. (1980) *Preoccupations: Selected Prose 1968 – 1978* London: Faber
- Heath, R.B. (ed.) (1993 3rd impression) *Tradewinds* Harlow: Longman
- Hedge, T. (2000) *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Heron, J. (1999) *The Complete Facilitator's Handbook* London: Kogan Page

- Hertz, J.H. (1938) *A Book of Jewish Thoughts* London and Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Heschel, A.J. (1951) *The Sabbath* Canada: HarperCollins
- Hidden Legacy Foundation (2000) *The Jews of Devon and Cornwall: Essays and Exhibition Catalogue* Bristol: Redcliffe Press
- Hitchcock, A. (1945) *Spellbound* London: National Film Archive
- Hoffman, E. (1997) *Shtetl* London: Secker and Warburg
- Holliday, A (1994) *Appropriate Methodology and Social Context* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Holm, A. (1963) *I am David* World Mammoth
- Holquist, M. (ed.)(1981) *The Dialogic Imagination: Four essays* : Austin, Texas
- Holub, M. (1998) *The Door* in Astley, N. (ed.) (1998) *Poetry with an Edge* Newcastle upon Tyne, Bloodaxe : 44
- Huberman, M. (1993) *The Lives of Teachers* New York: Teachers College Press/Cassell
- Hunt, C. (2000) *Therapeutic Dimensions of Autobiography in Creative Writing* London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Hunt, C. and Sampson, F. (2006) *Writing: self and reflexivity* Basingstoke Palgrave Macmillan
- Hyland, K. (2003) *Second Language Writing* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Hyland, K. and Hyland, F. (2006) *Feedback in Second Language Writing* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Ibrahim, Abdul Ghafir (1999) *Hello* in McRae, J. and M. Vethamani (eds.) (1999) *Now Read On: A Course in Multicultural Reading* Routledge, London
- Jacobs, L. (1983 reprint) *The Book of Jewish Values* London: Valentine, Mitchell
- Jacobson, D. (1998) *Heshel's Kingdom* London: Hamish Hamilton
- Jefferson, A. and Robey, D.(eds.) (1986) *Modern Literary Theory: a comparative introduction* 3rd edition Totowa, New Jersey : Barnes and Noble Books

- Johnson, D.W. and Johnson, F.P. (1991) *Joining Together: group theory and group skills* Englewood, NJ: Prentice-Hall International
- Johnson, K.E. & Golombek, P.R. (eds.) (2005) *Teachers' ways of knowing: narrative inquiry as professional development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Johnston, B.(2003) *Values in English Language Teaching*, Mahwah NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum
- Jung, C.G. (1971) *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* London and Glasgow: Fontana
- Kemmis, S. and McTaggart, R. eds. (1988) *The action research planner*, third edition. Victoria: Deakin University, Australia
- Kincheloe, J. (2003) *Teachers as Researchers* London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer
- Kirkpatrick, A. (2002) *Englishes in Asia: community, identity, power and education* Melbourne: Language Australia
- Kirkpatrick. A. (2007A) *World Englishes: implications for international communication and English language teaching* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Kirkpatrick A. (2007B) Teaching English Across Cultures. What do English language teachers need to know to know how to teach English? *English Australia Journal* 23 (2)
- Kok, P. (1991) *Rigour in Action Research*: presented to the International Conference of the Classroom Action Research Network, University of Nottingham, 19 – 21 April 1991
- Kolb, D. (1984), *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ.: Prentice-Hall
- Konin, T. !996) *Konin* London: Vintage
- Kotter, J. (2001) What Leaders Really Do in *Harvard Business Review*, December 2001
- Kumaravadivelu, B. and Gass, S. (eds.) (1997) *Beyond methods: New perspectives in second and foreign language education* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press .
- Lago, C. and Thompson, J (1997) *Race, Culture and Counselling* Buckingham, Open University Press
- Lemon, L.T. and Reis, M.J. (eds.) (1965) *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays* Lincoln Nebraska
- Leonard, G. B. (1968) *Education and Ecstasy* New York: Delta Books

- Lewin, R. (2001) *Weaving complexity and business: Engaging the Soul at Work* New York: Texere
- Lichtenstein, R. and Sinclair, I. (1999) *Rodinsky's Room* London: Granta
- Luft, J. (1969) *Of Human Interaction* Palo Alto, CA: National Press
- Lyotard, F. (1984) *The Postmodern Condition: a report on knowledge*. Manchester: Manchester University Press
- Magonet, J. (2003) *Talking to the Other* London: I.B. Tauris and Co. Ltd.
- Maimonides (ed. M.D. Rabinowitz) (1961) *Mishneh Torah: Book of Laws* Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook
- Mandela, N. (1994) *Long Walk to Freedom* London: Abacus
- Manfred, J. (2005) *Narratology: a guide to the theory of narrative* Cologne: University of Cologne <http://www.uni-koeln.de/-ame02/pppn.htm>
- Markham, E.A. (ed.) (1989) *Hinterland – Caribbean Poetry from the West Indies and Britain* Bloodaxe Books, Newcastle
- Marshall, J. (1984) *Women Managers: Travellers in a male world*. Chichester: Wiley
- Marshall, J. (1999) Living Life as Inquiry. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 12 (2) : 155 – 171
- Marshall, J. (2004) Living systemic thinking: exploring quality in first person research in *Action Research* Vol. 2 (3) Summer 2004 : 309 – 329
- Maslow, A. (1943) A Theory of Human Motivation in *Psychological Review* 50: 370 – 396 : Retrieved November 2007 from <http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Maslow/motivation.html>
- Maybin, J. and Swann, J. (2006) *The art of English: everyday creativity* Milton Keynes: Open University
- McGough, R. (1999) *Streemin* in Goodwin, D. (1999) *101 Poems that Could Save your Life* London: HarperCollins
- McLaughlin, D., & Tierney, W.G. (1993) *Naming silenced lives: personal narratives and processes of educational change*. New York: Routledge
- McNiff J. with Whitehead, J. and Laidlaw, M. (1992) *Creating a Good Social Order through Action Research* Poole, Dorset: Hyde Publications

- McNiff J. with Whitehead, J. (2002) *Action Research: Principles and Practice* London: RoutledgeFalmer
- McNiff, J. and Whitehead, J. (2005) *Action Research for Teachers: a practical guide* London: David Fulton
- Mendelsohn, E. (1996) *A Documentary History of Jewish Immigrants in Britain 1840 – 1920* London: Leicester University Press/Pinter Publishers
- Mercer, N (1995) *The guided construction of knowledge: talk amongst teachers and learners*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters
- Mercer, N. (2000), *Words and Minds: how we use language to think together*. London: Routledge
- Middlehurst, R.(1993) *Leading Academics* Buckingham: Open University Press/Society for Research into Higher Education
- Miller, A.L. (2000) *Insights of Genius: Imagery and Creativity in Science and Art* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press
- Milosz, C. (2002) *My Faithful Mother Tongue* in N.Astley (ed.) *Staying Alive* Tarsset, Northumberland: Bloodaxe : 336
- Minh-ha, T.T. (1999) ‘No Master Territories’ in Ashcroft, B. et. al. (eds.) *The Postcolonial Studies Reader* Routledge, London
- Morgan, E. The First Men on Mercury in *Learning and Teaching Scotland: Cross-Curricular Themes* retrieved January 10th 2003 from <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/literacy/findresources/edwinmorgan/poems/thefirstmenonmercury/poem.asp>
- Morrison, M. (2007) What do we mean by educational research? In (eds.) M. Coleman and A. Briggs *Research Methods in Educational Leadership and Management* London: Paul Chapman Publishers
- Moustakim, M. (2007) From transmission to dialogue: promoting critical engagement in higher education teaching and learning in *Educational Action Research* Vol. 15 no, 2 June 2007 : 209 – 220
- Munro, P. (1998) *Subject to Fiction; women teachers’ life history narratives and the cultural politics of resistance* Milton Keynes: Open University Press

- Naidoo, M. (2005) *I am because we are: how can I improve my practice? The emergence of a living theory of responsive practice* PhD thesis University of Bath retrieved March 2006 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/naidoo.html>
- Nafisi, A. (2003) *Reading Lolita in Teheran: A Memoir in Books* New York: Random House
- Negus, K. and Pickering, M. (2004) *Creativity, Communication and Cultural Value* London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage
- Neruda, P. (1973) *La poesia e blanca* in D.D. Walsh *Residence on Earth* Losada, S.A., Buenos Aires and New York: New Directions
- Nettle, D. (2001) *Strong Imagination: Madness, Creativity and Human Nature* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Neuberger, J. (1997) *On Being Jewish* London: Mandarin Paperbacks
- Nicholls, G. (1993) *i is a long memoried woman* Karnak Press, London
- OfSTED (2005) *Healthy minds: promoting emotional health and wellbeing in schools* retrieved January 12th 2007 from www.ofsted.gov.uk
- Olson, G.A. (2006) *Clifford Geertz on Ethnography and Social Construction: interview* in JAC Vol. 11 Issue 2 http://www.jacweb.org/Archived_volumes/
- Oxford English Dictionary* (1989 2nd edition) Burchfield, R. and Simpson, J. (eds.) Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Pagano, J. (1990) *Exiles and Communities: Teaching in the Wilderness* Albany NY: State University of New York Press
- Pamuk, O. (2006) (trans. M. Freely) *My Father's Suitcase: The Nobel Lecture* Delivered December 7th 2006 London: Faber and Faber
- Peel, D. (2005) Dual professionalism: facing the challenges of continuing professional development in the workplace in *Reflective Practice*, vol. 6 no. 1 Feb. 2005: 123 – 140
- Pollard, A. (2002) *Reflective Teaching* London and New York: Continuum
- Pope, R. (2002) *Textual Intervention: Critical and Creative Strategies for Literary Studies* London and New York: Routledge
- Pope, R. (2002) *Rewriting Texts: reconstructing the subject: work as play on the critical-creative interface* London: Palgrave

- Pope, R., (2005), *Creativity: theory, practice and history* London: RoutledgeFalmer
- Pope, R. (2005) The return of creativity in *Language and Literature* Vol. 14 (4): 376 to 389 London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi: Sage
- Propp, V. (1928) *The Morphology of the Folk Tale* translated from the Russian by Laurence Scott (1968) University of Texas Press
- Prowse, P. (2001) *Guidelines for Authors of Guided Readers* (Private circulation for authors) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- QCA (2001) *Creativity: find it, promote it* Accessed 29th March 2006
<http://www.ncaction.org.uk/creativity/whatis.htm>
- Research Assessment Exercise (2005) retrieved June 16th 2006 from
<http://www.rae.ac.uk/pubds/2005/04>
- Ramsden, P. (1998) *Learning to Lead in Higher Education* London and New York: Routledge
- Randall, M. and Thornton, B. (2001) *Advising and Supporting Teachers* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Reason, P. (2003) *Choice and quality in action research* Bath: University of Bath School of Management Working Papers Series
- Richmond, T. (1996) *Konin* London: Vintage
- Rimmon-Kenan, S. (1996) *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* London and New York: Routledge
- Robinson, K. (2006) *All our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education* National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education NACCE
- Roche, M. (2007) *Towards a living theory of caring pedagogy: interrogating my practice to nurture a critical, emancipatory and just community of enquiry* PhD dissertation retrieved on October 28th 2007 from
<http://www.jeanmcniff.com/MaryRoche/index.html>
- Roden, C. (1999) *The Book of Jewish Food*: London: Penguin Books
- Rogers, C. (1983) *Freedom to Learn* New York and Toronto: Macmillan
- Rogers, C. (1990) *On becoming a person: a therapist's view of psychotherapy* London: Constable and Company Ltd.

- Safran Foer, Jonathan (2001) *Everything is Illuminated* London: Hamish Hamilton
- Sage, Lorna (2000) *Bad Blood* Fourth Estate, London
- Sakowska, R. (1995) *The Warsaw Ghetto* Warsaw: Ryszard Nowicki
- Sarros, J.C., Gmelch, W.H., and Tanewski, G.A. (1997a) The Role of Department Head in Australian Universities: changes and challenges: in *Higher Education Research & Development*, Vol. 16, no. 1 1997 : 9 – 23
- Sarros, J.C., Gmelch, W.H., and Tanewski, G.A. (1997b) The Role of Department Head in Australian Universities: Tasks and Stresses in *Higher Education Research & Development*, Vol. 16, no. 3 1997 : 283 – 242
- Sartre, J. - P. (1964) *The Words* Fawcett Crest Books, Greenwich USA
- Scharf, R.J. (1998) *Poland, What have I to do with thee...* London: Valentine Mitchell
- Schauss, H. (1950) *The Lifetime of a Jew* Union of American Hebrew congregations
- Schon, D. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* New York: Basic
- Schutz, A. (2004) Rethinking Domination and Resistance: Challenging Postmodernism in *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 33 no. 1 : 15 – 23
- Schutz, A. (2005) Theory illuminates (and conceals): a response to the critique by Samantha Caughlan in *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 34, no. 2 March 2005 : 17 – 19
- Senge, P. (1990) *The Fifth Discipline* New York: Doubleday/Currency
- Senge, P., Kleiner, A., Roberts, C., Ross, R., Roth, G. and Smith, B. (1999) *The Dance of Change: the Challenges of Sustaining Momentum in Learning Organisations*. New Work: Doubleday/Currency
- Senge, P. et al (2000) *Schools that Learn: a Fifth Discipline Fieldbook for Educators, Parents, and Everyone who Cares about Education* New York: Doubleday/Currency
- Sercu, L. and Paran, A. (forthcoming) *Testing the Untestable* London: Macmillan/Multilingual Matters
- Shank, R. (1990) *Tell me a Story: narrative and intelligence* Everton, Illinois: NorthWestern University Press
- Simmons, G., K. Pearce and Fry, H. (1999) *The Lost Jews of Cornwall* Bristol: Radcliffe Press

- Sinclair, A. (2005) Body Possibilities in Leadership in *Leadership* Vol. 14: 387 to 406 Sage Publications (London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi)
- Smith, M.K. (2001) Peter Senge and the learning organization *the encyclopedia of informal education* retrieved June 20th 2005 from www.infed.org/thinkers/senge.htm
- Smith, Z. (2000) *White Teeth* London: Penguin
- Sotto, E. (1994) *When Teaching becomes Learning* London: Cassell
- Spiro, J. (1979) 'Ars' versus 'ingenium' in English Renaissance literary theory Unpublished MPhil dissertation Warburg Institute, University of London
- Spiro, J. (1986) *Reference to 'given' information in stereotype narrative: a cross-sectional study* Unpublished MA dissertation University of Reading
- Spiro, J. (1990a) *The Place of the Lotus* Sevenoaks, Kent: Edward Arnold
- Spiro, J. (1990b) *The Twin Chariot* Sevenoaks, Kent: Edward Arnold
- Spiro, J. (1991) Assessing Literature: four papers in Brumfit, C. (ed.) *Assessment in Literature Teaching* London and Basingstoke: Macmillan : 16 – 83
- Spiro, J. (1994) Storytelling as an Image of Life in D. Hill (ed.) *English Language Teaching* Bologna, Italy: British Council : 161 – 167
- Spiro, J. (1998) *Etzbah Elohim: Julek Tigner's story* Unpublished family archive
- Spiro, J. (2001a) *Five West Country Cameos* Unpublished play performed Feb. 2001: Plymouth Museum
- Spiro, J. (2001b) *The Seed and the Tree* Unpublished play performed Feb. 2001 Plymouth Museum
- Spiro, J. (2002) *Nothing I Touch Stands Still* Norton St. Phillip: Crucible Press
- Spiro, J. (2004) *Creative Poetry Writing* Oxford University Press, Oxford
- Spiro, J. (2007) *Storybuilding* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Spiro, J. (2007a) Teaching poetry: writing poetry - Teaching as a Writer in *English in Education: Poetry Matters* NATE Journal Autumn 2007 Vol. 41 no. 3: 78 - 93
- Spiro, J. (2007b) Feeling poetry; the power of praise in *Humanising Language Teaching* Year 9 Issue 4 July 2007 retrieved July 2007 from <http://hltnmag.co.uk/jul07/less01.htm>

- Stables, A.(2003) Learning, identity and classroom dialogue in *Journal of Educational Enquiry* Vol. 4, no. 1 : 1 – 18
- Stringer, E.T.(1999) *Action research: a handbook for practitioners* Newbury Park: Sage
- Stringer, E.T. (2003) *Action Research in Education* London: Prentice Hall
- Swanson, D.R. (1994) Toward a Psychology of Metaphor in Sacks, S. (1994 ed,) *On Metaphor* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press : 161- 164
- Tannen, D. (2001) *Talking from 9 to 5: Women and men at work: language, sex and power* London: Virago
- Thomas, D. (1995) *Teachers' Stories* Milton Keynes: Open University Press
- Tobias, R. (1995) *Twenty Master Plots and How to Build Them*, London: Piatkus
- Toolan, M. (2001) *Narrative: a critical linguistic introduction* London: Routledge
- Toolan, M. (2006) In search of plot structure in S. Goodman and K. O'Halloran (2006) *The art of English: literary creativity* Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan/Open University : 124 – 127
- Tripp, D. (1993) *Critical Incidents in Teaching: Developing Professional Judgement* London and New York: Routledge
- Underhill, A. (2007) Reflective practice, action, inquiry and deep values in *Research Special Interest Newsletter* Summer 2007 Issue 20 : 3-5
- Union of Liberal Progressive Synagogues (1995) *Siddur Lev Chadash: Services and Prayers for Weekdays and Sabbaths* London:: The Montagu Centre
- Urdike, J. (2003) *Superman* retrieved Jan. 12th 2003 from <http://www.dabush.org/Poems/Superman.html>
- Urdike, J. (2007) Testing the Limits of What I Know and Feel in J.Allison and D.Gediman *This I Believe* New York: Holt : 244 - 246
- Vahapassi, A. (1982) On the specification of the domain of school writing in A.C. Purves and S. Takala (eds.) *An international perspective on the evaluation of written composition* Oxford: Pergamon : 265- 289
- Van Manen, M. (1997) *Researching Lived Experience* Ontario: Althouse Press

- Van Manen, M. (ed.) (2002) *Writing in the Dark: phenomenological studies in interpretative inquiry* Ontario; Althouse Press
- Van Maurik, J. (2001) *Writers on Leadership* London: Penguin
- Vasiljuk, F. (1991) *The Psychology of Experiencing: the Resolution of Life's Critical Situations* Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf
- Vygotsky L. S. (1962) *Thought and Language*, Cambridge, Mass, M.I.T. Press
- Wallace, M. (1991) *Training Foreign Language Teachers: a reflective approach* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Wallace, M. (1998) *Action Research for Language Teachers* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Wallas, G. (1926) *The Art of Thought* New York: HarcourtBrace
- Weigle, S.C. (2002) *Assessing Writing* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Weisberg, R.W. (1993) *Creativity: Beyond the Myth of Genius*. New York: W.H. Freeman
- Weiss, A. and Bretton-Granatoor, G. (1998) *Shalom: Salaam: a resource for Jewish Muslim dialogue* New York: Urj Press
- Weissberg, R. (2006) Scaffolded feedback: Tutorial conversations with advanced L2 writers in Hyland, K. and F. Hyland (2006) *Feedback in Second Language Writing* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press : 246 – 265
- Welchmann, G.D. (2001) Revisioning Knowledge Transformation in the Pacific in *The Contemporary Pacific* Vol. 13 no. 1 Spring 2001 : 178- 183
- Whitehead, J. (1993) *The Growth of Educational Enquiry* Bournemouth, Dorset: Hyde Publications
- Whitehead, J. and McNiff, J. (2006) *Action Research: Living Theory* London: Sage
- Whitehead, J. (2007) *Action Planning in Creating your own Living Educational Theory* retrieved 30 October 2007 from <http://www.jackwhitehead.com/jack/arplanner.htm>
- Winter, R. (1989) *Learning from Experience* London: Falmer
- Witherall, C., & Noddings, N. (1991), *Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and dialogue in education*. New York: Teachers College Press

Wragg, T. (2005) in *Guardian Education* Nov. 15th 2005

Wright, K. (1987) *The Magic Box* in Wright, K. *Cat among the Pigeons* London: Viking Kestrel

Woods, D. (1988) *How Children Think and Learn* Oxford: Blackwell

Woods, D. (1996). *Teacher cognition in language teaching: Beliefs, decision-making and classroom practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Zuber-Skerritt, O. (ed.) (1996) *Action Research in Higher Education* London: Kogan Page

Childrens' stories (editions read in childhood)

Baum, L.F. (1900) *The Wizard of Oz* Chicago: Geo.M. Hill

Bond, M. (1958) *Paddington Bear* London: William Collins & Sons

Brent-Dyer, E. (1958) *The Chalet School and Richenda* London: W. & R.Chambers

Crompton, R. (!964) *Just William* London: Macmillan Childrens' Paperbacks

Holm, A. (1963) *I am David* World Mammoth Books

Lewis, C.S. (1964) *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* London: Penguin Books

Nesbit, E. (1902) *Five Children and It* London: T. Fisher Unwin

Power, R. (1953) *Redcap Runs Away* London: Houghton Mifflin

Spyri, J. (1954) *Heidi* London: Heirloom Library

Learner and teacher as fellow travellers

A story tribute to Jack Whitehead

One day I came to the edge of a cliff. There seemed no way forward, and the way back was blocked by a strange and faceless creature that stood with his huge arms stretched across my path.

“Only members of the Laurel Crown Club may proceed,” he said.

“Which Club is that?” I cried, tired from all my many travels, “and how can I join it?”

“You join it by following my dance, step by step, and after each step, proving you are as good as I am.”

“But that’s ridiculous,” I said. “Why should I want to do that? Look, here is the garland of the storyteller, woven by myself from a thousand stories.”

“That is nothing,” said the creature.

“And here is the crown of the teacher, made of shells excavated from a thousand shores and threaded together with spun learning.”

The faceless creature laughed a bitter icy laugh.

“None of these will bring you the Laurel Crown, because none of the steps are like mine,” he crowed. “Without this, how do I know you are good enough to continue the journey?”

“Because of all the journeys I’ve already travelled!” I shouted. “The bridge-building journey, the river-crossing, the boat-making, the flower-blooming, the story-making, the wisdom-excavating journeys. Do none of those count?”

“None are mine!” yelled the creature. “And I, Thought Doctor, am the only one that can lead the way. Take my journey or none at all.”

“OK, if you must, show me the way then. Since I have travelled so far, I might as well do this further journey.”

Thought Doctor pointed with his long bony finger towards the hills. I noticed a long narrow track like a railway that burned an unbending route through the valleys, tunnelled through the hillside, and plunged into the woods the other side.

“That’s it,” he said. “You follow me, along the track, copying my dance, and at the end you win the crown.”

The journey seemed possible, and better than throwing myself over the cliff. But still, it did not seem a very exciting or useful way to travel, with so much landscape to explore on either side of the narrow track, and so many ways to explore apart from following his single step. And how would I carry with me all the garlands, sarongs, shells, and songs of previous journeys, if I was not allowed to offer them and share them on the way?

I threw myself down onto the grassy ground to think about my options. As I did so, I noticed appearing from behind Thought Doctor's cloak, a silent group of people, cloaked, pale and downcast, gathering around me on the cliff.

"We are members of the Laurel Crown Club," they said.

I looked at them now as they stood nearer me.

"But you all look the same!" I cried.

"When we started we were all different," one of them said, "but by the end we have all learnt Thought Doctor's moves so well, we look just like him."

"If you are Laurel Crown members, where are your crowns?"

"Here!" said one, and threw off his hood to reveal a shiny metallic crown that looked far too heavy for him and made him stoop forward.

"Here!" said another, and revealed the same metallic shiny crown but it was so large it kept dropping over her eyes, and she had to push it up every few minutes.

"Here!" said another, and there was the crown again, but every so often the poor owner picked up a corner and began scratching underneath, shifting it round so it would sit more comfortably.

"None of your crowns fit!" I cried, concerned for them.

They laughed in chorus, like a pond of hippopotami.

"Of course not. There's only one size crown. If it doesn't fit, well that's just too bad. They all need to be the same size, to make sure it's all fair."

"But being just the same size makes it NOT fair," I cried.

Thought Doctor rolled his eyes, exasperated, and turned away.

"She clearly doesn't understand," he snorted. "Come, Club, let's leave her here to think."

I sat by the cliff edge, suddenly alone, and looked in both directions. In one direction was a sheer drop down to a fast running river gorge. On the other was the Laurel Crown track, long and straight, with bunches of flowers every so often along

the route where travellers had failed to survive. What to do? Now, with the Thought Doctor gone, there seemed to be many more possibilities. Looking again at the landscape ahead, it seemed laughable that there should be only one track forwards; on the contrary, there seemed to be an infinite number of paths, and surely nothing would stop me exploring them?

Encouraged by this thought, I stood up and again reviewed my options. In one direction was open hillside scattered with a blue dusting of heather; in the other direction was the path I had come from, winding over the cliff edge and dropping back down to a chain of rocky bays. I chose the new direction, the open hillside. Surely, if I set foot there, Thought Doctor wouldn't stop me?

So I began the new path, into the blue heather and the unmarked terrain. It was welcoming underfoot, and comforting to walk inland away from the cliff edge, wading through the tall grass, not knowing where it would lead me. After a while, as I walked, I suddenly became aware that there was a Fellow Traveller quietly beside me, and like me, quietly tracing the path of the wild flowers. I looked up to take note of him, and to my surprise, saw he was wearing a crown too.

"Oh! Your crown fits!" I cried.

"Of course it does," said Fellow Traveller. "I made it myself."

We carried on walking, quietly for a while.

"But is it a Laurel Crown, like the others?"

"Yes, of course it is."

"But did you do that long journey, like the others?"

"Yes, yes I did," said the Traveller patiently.

"But how is it you don't look just like all the others? How is it you have strayed off the track?"

"Well I worked out the route for myself."

"Is that allowed?"

"Of course it is. That's what I did, and I have a Crown and it fits just fine."

I could see that all of those things were true. It seemed an exciting and revolutionary way to become a member of the Club.

"Could you show me how I might get a Crown that way too?"

"Sure, of course."

We carried on walking, and the Fellow Traveller didn't seem to be showing me anything at all, but just following where I went along the hillside.

“But you aren’t showing me. Shouldn’t you be showing me the way?”

“No, quite the reverse. You choose which way you want to go, and I’ll come along with you.”

“Are you sure?” I asked, nervously. It all seemed so different to Thought Doctor.

“Look, the end of the journey is over there.” He pointed beyond the wood where the narrow track disappeared. “You can get there any way you like.”

I took from my sack a handful of shiny stones gathered from a Mexican beach and threw them down.

“Can I use these as stepping stones?”

“Sure, of course,” and we jumped from one to the other, first me, and Fellow Traveller following.

“Take a stepping stone to put in your crown,” he said, as we reached the end. “Now, where next?”

“If I scatter the marigold garland we could follow its scent,”

“Sure, try that,” said Fellow Traveller.

It was tiring, running after the scent of the marigold as it blew in the wind, and at the end, I threw myself down on a rock and sighed.

“I don’t know where to go next.”

“Yes you do. Look in your bag.”

“I’ve nothing there. Nothing useful at all.”

“Of course you have. Just have a look.”

“A sari from India, a sarong from Hawaii, a branch from the learning tree, -“

“OK, let’s start with the first one. Find out where the sari wants us to go next.”

I took the sari out of its bag. It was buttercup yellow with streaks of quiet lavender, and as it unfolded from the bag it began to blow like a sail towards the east.

“There we are then,” said Fellow Traveller, “that’s the direction we have to go in.”

So we followed the sail of the sari, and then the kite of the sarong; and then the branch of the learning tree doused us around the tors and I hardly knew we had travelled so far before I realised the station had appeared at the end of the Thought Doctor’s narrow track.

“Do you mean we are nearly there?”

“Sure. You need to get your laurel crown ready for submission to the Club.”

“Oh no, one of those terrible metal ones that fall over your eyes and itch?”

Fellow Traveller laughed

“A made-to-measure one, made with all the mementoes of your journey. It will take two months to craft”

“Are you sure?” I said. “Will it be as good as the others?”

“Well, I think it might be better, because for one thing it will fit, for another it will be quite unique and for another it will have mementoes of your journey inside it.”

“What do I do when I reach the last station?”

“When you arrive, and put on the crown, look in the mirror. There you will see what you have become and where the journey led.”

In a quiet place at the station gates, I unfolded all the contents of my travels around me and spread them on the ground. How to fit them together? Surely they could never be crafted into one coherent and beautiful piece?

But as I stared at them hour after hour alone now outside the gates of my destination, it all became clear.

The learning branch became the strong anchor that held the crown together. With the golden learning thread I wove in the Mexican stepping stones, securely at the front. Then I rolled the lavender and buttercup sari and the sarong with the silver fish and turtles, into long narrow drapes and plaited them together with the learning thread to hold the branch in place. Between the binds and threads, I planted small clusters of heather from the journey. The crown was fragrant and colourful as a spring garden. Then I lifted it to my head, and tied the plaited fronds behind just tightly enough to be comfortable and secure.

“Will this do?” I asked.

“What does the mirror say?”

I looked in the mirror. I saw myself, like a spring goddess with all the colours of the hillside in her hair. I didn’t look a bit like Thought Doctor or even like Fellow Traveller.

“I look like the goddess of my story!” I cried, surprised.

“Exactly that,” said Fellow Traveller. “The journey was yourself, so it follows that the journey leads to yourself. And your Crown celebrates yourself.”

“Is that going to be alright, do you think?”

Story epilogue

“That’s the only way it *would* be alright. I think you are ready to submit your Crown to the Club,” said Fellow Traveller.

And together we walked towards the gates of the station at the end of the mountain path, both of us with heads high, wearing our Laurel Crowns.

How I have arrived at a notion of *knowledge transformation*, through understanding the story of myself as creative writer, creative educator, creative manager, and educational researcher.

**Volume 2 of 2
Jane Roberta Spiro
A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
University of Bath
Department of Education
January 2008**

COPYRIGHT

Attention is drawn to the fact that copyright of this thesis rests with its author. This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognize that its copyright rests with its author and that no quotation from the thesis and no information derived from it may be published without the prior consent of the author.

This thesis may be made available for consultation within the University Library and may be photocopied or lent to other libraries for the purposes of consultation.

Signed _____
Jane Spiro

Volume 2

CONNECTING STORIES: APPENDIX READINGS

How I have arrived at a notion of *knowledge transformation* through understanding the story of myself as creative writer, creative educator, creative manager, and educational researcher?

Creative Writer: storymaking

Novel, poems, and writings melded into educational projects at several stages in a career: including short stories written in controlled language for language learners, poems performed for television and published on the Oxford Buses

1. Spiro, J. (1970) *Gingerhoof Island* Unpublished
Synopsis and Chapter One pp. 1 – 6 4
2. Spiro, J. (1990) *The Place of the Lotus* London: Edward Arnold
pp. 12 – 18, pp. 51- 59 11
3. Spiro, J. (1990) *The Twin Chariot* London: Edward Arnold pp. 3 – 7,
pp. 10 – 18, pp. 37 – 45 21
4. Spiro, J. (1995) Return to the Fatherland in *North Stone Review* Minnesota no.
12 1995: performed on Carlton/West Country Illuminations June 1997 35
5. Spiro, J. (1994) Passover Service Runner-up Kent and Sussex poetry prize
1994 and performed on Carlton/West Country Illuminations June 1997 36
6. Spiro, J. (2002) *Nothing I Touch Stands Still* Norton St. Phillip: Crucible
Press pp. 58 – 64, pp. 95 – 99, pp. 143 – 149 37
7. Spiro, J. (2003) Travelling Light in *London Tales* Recanati: ELI
pp. 80 – 108 60
8. Spiro, J. (2004) The Man Upstairs in *A Twist in the Tale* Recanati: ELI
pp. 45 – 71 76
9. Spiro, J. (2005) Elegy found in a Rare Meadow in *Resurgence* Jan/Feb 2005
no. 228 p. 40 93
10. Spiro, J. (2007) Meeting Confucius : poster in *Poetry on the Buses*: 94
Oxford Brookes/National Lottery/Brookes bus

Creative Educator: teacher resources and student voices

Educational outcomes including teacher resources, assessment cycles, programme development, student evaluations, and two books for teachers written and published during the PhD writing process.

11. Spiro, J. (ed.) (1998) *Go and Open the Door: student poetry* Creative writing workshop, Plymouth 95
12. Spiro, J. (ed) (2006) *Oxford Summer Poetry* Oxford International Teachers' Summer School Exeter College, Oxford 111
13. Student evaluations of poetry workshops: Oxford University International Teachers' Summer School, Summer 2006 120
14. Spiro, J. (2004) *Creative Poetry Writing* Oxford: Oxford University Press pp. 5 – 12, pp.48 – 63 131
15. Spiro, J. (2007) *Storybuilding* Oxford: Oxford University Press Chapter Five pp. 71 – 84 156
16. Spiro, J. (2005) The Alchemy of Objects in Angwin, R. (2005) *Writing the Bright Moment* Yelverton, Devon: Fire in the Head pp. 305 – 309 171

Talking to the academy

Articles joining the dialogue within the academy, with testimony to their currency; including articles on assessment, story, language teaching methodology, teacher narratives and several articles about the interlocking of creativity and criticism

17. Spiro, J. (1991) Language Teaching and the Literature Test: Laying the Foundations: the first paper of 4 in Assessing Literature: Four Papers in Brumfit, C. (1991) *Assessment in Literature Teaching* London and Basingstoke: Macmillan pp. 16 – 32 176
18. Spiro, J. (1994) Storytelling as in Image of Life: Story Telling as a Bridge between Receptive and Productive Skills in Hill, D. (ed.) (1994) *English Language Teaching* Bologna, Italy: British Council pp. 161 – 167 186
19. Spiro, J. (1996) Good jokes and bad questions: testing literary students in Hill, D.A. (1996) *Papers on Teaching Literature* Milano, Italy: British Council pp. 52 – 55 193
20. Spiro, J. (2004) Creative Writing in the Language Classroom in Mukundan, J., Abidin and Hussin (eds.) (2004) *ELT Matters 1: Issues in English Language*

Teaching and Learning Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Putra Malaysia Press pp. 87
– 97 197

21. Spiro, J. (2004) Finding Voices, Making Strange in *AngloFiles* Vol. 133, Sep.
'04 The Danish Association of Teachers of English pp. 44- 56 208

22. Spiro, J. (2006) Becoming a Second Language Story Writer in Mukundan, J.
(ed.) (2006) *Readings on ELT Materials II* Kuala Lumpur LongmanPearson
Malaysia pp. 47 – 60 221

23. Spiro, J. and K. Basich (2000) Peer mentoring as co-operative learning in
Teacher Trainer Vol.14, No. 3 Autumn 2000 pp. 3 – 5 229

24. Spiro, J. (2006) Tales out of School in *ELGazette* February 2005 p. 10 232

25. Spiro, J. (2007) Shrinking Distance in *ELGazette* March 2007 p. 13 233

26. Spiro, J. (2007) Teachers' Stories: poster presented at Oxford Brookes
Teaching and Learning Conference Feb. 2007 234

Creative Educator: teacher resources and student voices

*Educational outcomes including teacher resources, assessment cycles,
programme development, student evaluations, and two books for teachers written
and published during the PhD writing process.*

Talking to the academy

Articles joining the dialogue within the academy, with testimony to their currency; including articles on assessment, story, language teaching methodology, teacher narratives and several articles about the interlocking of creativity and criticism.

Creative Writer: storymaking

Novel, poems, and writings melded into educational projects at several stages in a career: including short stories written in controlled language for language learners, poems performed for television and published on the Oxford Buses